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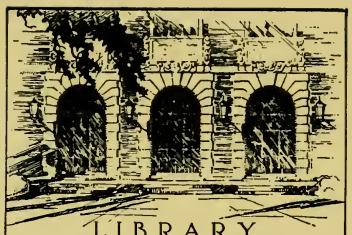

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# JACQUELINE OF HOLLAND.

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VOL. I.

LONDON:

HENRY BAYLIS, JOHNSON'S-COURT, FLEET-STREET.

# JACQUELINE OF HOLLAND.

A HISTORICAL TALE.

BY

THOMAS COLLEY GRATTAN,

AUTHOR OF "THE HEIRESS OF BRUGES," &c.

Nought is there under Heaven's wide hollownesse
That moves more deare compassion of minde,
Than beautie brought t' unworthy wretchednesse,
Through envie's snares, or fortune's freakes unkinde.
I, whether lately through her brightnesse blynde,
Or through alleageance and faste fealtie,
Which I do owe unto all womankynde,
Feele my hart perst with so greate agonie
When such I see, that all for pitty I could dy.

*Faerie Queene.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN AND RICHARD BENTLEY,
NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1831.

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TO

SIR ARTHUR BROOKE FAULKNER, KNT.

*&c. &c. &c.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WERE not the reading world so intolerant of mere undisguised *prefaces*, I should not have been induced to cheat it into attention and bespeak its favour, by pressing your name into such light service as this; nor have carried into public a correspondence which is so much the pleasure of my private life. But there are several reasons for my choosing you as a literary sponsor on the present occasion, independent of the motives of regard and respect implied in every Dedication. It is perhaps sufficient to mention the sympathy which I know you to feel in my subject.

We have cut through the fogs of a Dutch winter together. While I sought inspiration in the chronicles of the olden time, and you drew from the still deeper and purer wells of practical philosophy, we were now and then encouraged by glimpses of fair forms, shewing through the mist enough of grace and beauty to add truth to fancy and embellishment to fact. You have traced with me nearly every locality of my Heroine's adventurous life. You can, therefore, better than any one else, admit the probability of my imaginings, and vouch for the veracity of my descriptions.

Yet I have been, if not actually disheartened at least much discouraged, in venturing on ground so unexplored as the countries I have chosen for the scene of this and my last novel. By readers who will believe in my pages, the redundant wealth of Netherland annals may be guessed at. To understand it thoroughly, many a folio must be waded through, teeming with such lore.

If I can, even with moderate success, bring some of those abounding subjects to light, I shall be satisfied. To paint Holland as it was four centuries back—torn by factions and the prey of a repacious usurper—may convince some sceptic as to the influences of civilization, who sees the same country to-day, in an aspect of union and energy, which extracts our admiration, in spite of the many revolting anomalies in a people so selfish and unsocial: while, on the other hand, we may marvel at, and draw a moral from, the spectacle of a nation so changed by commerce, from its once generous and chivalric character, as to hate in the abstract, and grudge to others, the liberty so bravely won and so amply enjoyed by itself. While universal Europe throbs with painful exultation at each new detail of Polish heroism, and glories in the well regulated triumph of popular right in England, Holland is the exception which proves the general rule. For there is to be found a whole people imbued with those prejudices

against European freedom, so nauseously natural in the sycophants who bow down, body and mind, in the closets and anti-rooms of despotism.

Yet it is probably the egotistical narrowness so remarkable in the Dutch character that creates the present display of national power. When each individual takes care of number one, the total of the country's interests is in safe keeping. But so much that is abstruse may be connected with this topic, that I will merely throw it out as a text, on which I do not profess the capability of preaching.

Quite independent, however, of any purpose of utility is the pleasure derivable from the composition of such a book as this. History, properly so called, is but a profound science, by which the mere student is more fatigued than improved, but which is to the Novelist a buoyant recreation. The writer of Romance, who brings men and women to move on the well-known scenes of history, walks on real grounds, with forms instead of shadows, and lives in a fresh-

springing circle of beings and events, that are of interest and value, in proportion as they do not violate the general truths of Nature, or those which the world has agreed to consider as admitted, if not proved.

But this career of romance writing is as perilous as it is seductive; and might deter any one who does not despise the reproach of imitation. Are sculptors or painters to be frightened, because great artists have used the chisel or brush before them? And must authors of my own pursuits throw down the pen, because others have done miracles in the delineation of that nature which should be our common study? Must I, for instance, let Jacqueline of Holland rot in a niche of vulgar history, because Mary, of Scotland, or English Elizabeth, has been granted a new patent of immortality, from the hands of the first Romance-writer of the age? No. I, at least, will persist in offering my mite towards these illustrations, doing justice to female worth, and exhibiting the baseness of

History's favourites—mispainted and miscalled, like "the *good* dukes" who figure in these pages —until the fiat of fair criticism commands me to stop: and then, like the reclaimed robber (in Gil Blas, is it not?) who, unsuccessfully tried a more regular walk of life, I can grasp my stick in my hand, and take to the "Highways" again.

On looking back on what I have been writing, I feel called on to acknowledge having met a few exceptions in Holland to the dearth of those generous courtesies which give so superior a charm to other countries. I need not specify all names. But in referring to the several individuals who kindly furnished facilities for the performance of my present task, I must mention Baron Van Tuyll d' Ysledom. This gentleman, whose near neighbourhood to the ruins of Teylingen, and whose connection with the existing Castle of Zuylen (both of such interest in the History of my Heroine) made his ability to forward my object equal to his wish, knew how to

add value to his information by that cordial hospitality which, joined to the external appearance of his place, makes the sojourner fancy himself on some transplanted spot, of what will soon again, please Heaven! be entitled to be called "merrie" England.

And now, in conclusion, let me, my dear Faulkner, entreat you to excuse my thus having used your name for my own purposes—were it only for my withholding epithets of eulogy, which might offend your modesty, but which should be exaggerated indeed to express more than I feel of esteem and friendship.

Yours very sincerely,

T. C. G.

*June*, 1831.

# JACQUELINE OF HOLLAND.

## CHAPTER I.

On the southern limits of the wild district, called the *Zevenvolden*,* close to the desert plains of the ancient county of Drent, where they were washed by the Zuyder Zee, a species of hunting tent, but of much better materials than those used by the rude sportsmen of the forest, was suspended from the overhanging branches of a knoll of oaks. It was surrounded

* Seven forests.

by groups of prickers, with bugles slung across their shoulders, and holding in leash greyhounds of the large red Albanian breed, and Flemish brachs, of coarse and spotted skins; varlets, tending horses, caparisoned with long coverings; soldiers, armed at all points and halberds in hand: but the active movements of those who prepare for the chace, the joyous songs, the cries of dogs, the flourish of horns, did not break the silence of the place. It had often been the scene of similar assemblages; but at no former period, nor even during the four centuries which have elapsed since that day, had it been sought by so distinguished a company, or for so serious a purpose.

Under the pavilion were two persons: the one, a man of more than middle age, sat with his hands clasped together, his legs crossed, and his elbows resting on the arms of a large chair, which was garnished with the unusual luxury of a flock cushion. Notwithstanding this attitude of lazy indifference, he did not seem at his

ease. He appeared incommoded by his riding dress of brown cloth of Bruges, although his doublet was open on his breast, and his red leather girdle was loosely buckled round his portly waist. A few short, grisled hairs fringed the circumference of his large head, which was covered with a hat of grey felt. His rosy jowls were whiskerless; nor was there mustachio on his upper lip, nor beard on his chin. Nothing but the texture and pattern of his dress was characteristic of the man of quality or the sportsman.

Standing near to him, and leaning on a bow of Spanish yew, a female of elegant form, and a face of melancholy beauty, listened, but with a pre-occupied air, to his discourse. Her features were more strongly marked than those of mere girls in early youth; yet they joined a bloom and freshness rarely found after the very spring-time of life, to a decided dignity that only belongs to womanhood; and her face displayed that harmonious brilliancy which can

receive the imprint of suffering without being withered by it. She was dressed in the fashion of the wealthier females of Holland, in a robe of fine white kersey, over which was a light blue pourpoint of the same stuff, close fitting her bust and waist, but with loose flaps that reached the knees. Her hair, worn in great profusion, was fancifully garnished with side plates and rings of gold, studded with precious stones; and beneath her high cap of green velvet hung innumerable curls, of light brown, tinged with occasional streaks of a shade that was all but auburn. Her shoes of blue morocco were sharp pointed, and turned up almost to the instep; and a narrow belt of blue silk was fastened in front with a diamond aigrette, below which hung two points of gold filagree work.

"You see the good effect of piety and prayer, my lovely countess, my much honoured daughter," said her companion, in the French language, but with the harsh accent of the north. "While you encountered such manifold perils,

I unceasingly offered up masses for your success; and here you are, safely arrived in harbour, or at least, your bark is launched under fair auspices."

"Yes, but on a stormy sea!" replied she, with a heavy sigh.

"What then? You have a bold and skilful pilot to conduct it," replied the disguised ecclesiastic, with a satisfied air. "The son, brother, and uncle of kings, himself the regent of an empire, is the man to throw defiance in the teeth of your unnatural cousin. By the shrine of St. Willebrod, this is what I call a marriage! Half the princesses in Europe will envy you."

The beautiful huntress, for such she was, as well in spirit as in seeming, threw her azure eyes to Heaven, and a tear glistened on their long lashes.

The churchman looked peevish and dissatisfied; and in a tone, half angry and half cringing, he continued,

"Nay, Madam, recollect it is he alone that can now save your heritage from utter spoliation. Who but the royal Glocester can make head against all-powerful Burgundy? or shew the world how bad is his title to his misplaced name of 'the Good?' How but by his aid are your faithful vassals to be saved, and your free towns of Holland and Zealand to hold their freedom? And one daring friend, Zweder Van Culemborg, with his see of Utrecht, what is to become of him, should ambitious Philip surprise us, without other help than our enmity? Let me tell you, my honoured princess, that in this perilous game it is I who have the largest stake, for the *good* Duke Philip would hunt me down to the death, if he suspected but a tithe of all I am doing for you."

"My reverend lord, let your anxieties rest on their true base," replied the lady, with a somewhat disdainful pride. "Things have gone too far to allow of my holding back; and you need not to learn that Jacqueline of Hol-

land comes of a race which has ever feared dishonour more than misfortune."

"Ay, that is spoken like yourself, like the descendant of your noble line," replied the reassured bishop, rubbing his hands with selfish joy; "and if you would make surety more sure, if you would rivet one link, to join us all in a chain of common safety rather than of common risk, is not this the time? What can be more lucky than my presence to tie the nuptial knot? and when could you better change the title of affianced bride for that of wedded wife?"

As he raised his eyes to those of Jacqueline, his discourse was at once cut short at seeing them sparkle with indignation. And dropping his looks again towards the ground, where they were commonly fixed whenever he spoke, he listened without interruption as she replied:—

"Count, or prelate, for I give you your choice of titles in this matter of secular or clerical concern, it is well at this outset of our enterprize that we understand each other. Your

alliance is of high price to one in my forlorn situation, and still more valuable is the aid of England's regent. But for neither can I forego the sense of my own dignity, nor incur the blame of my own conscience. I am satisfied, if Heaven wills it so, to be the most wretched of women; but I will die sooner than do aught I may be ashamed of. How, then, can you counsel me a secret marriage while another husband yet lives, and ere my hated bonds are yet broken?"

"Nay, your interest and his highness of Glocester's, leave little doubt of your unlawful marriage being at this hour annulled, even if John of Brabant yet live to receive the bull by which his Holiness will sever your union. Both divorce and widowhood may at this moment be yours. Then hesitate not on weak scruples, from which I am ready to absolve you."

"Alas, alas!" said Jacqueline, sinking on a chair similar to the bishop's, "how often on my sad and dreary path of life have I met those ever ready to remove the scruples of my

concience, and point out the broad road to crime!"

"Crime, Madam Jacqueline!"

"No less, reverend count. When my first affianced lord, the Dauphin, fell a victim to perfidy and poison, and I lost at once a promised husband and a crown, how many a tongue held forth to check the tide of natural remorse, with which I looked on the unholy union with my hated cousin John! And when I did yield me to the counsel of my *friends*, and sacrificed myself to the mere phantom of a spouse, who could scarcely bear the burden of his own infirmities, much less uphold me and my rights—how was I urged, ay, by this very pontiff, Martin V., to overcome the terror which made me, as I declared in full assembly to the states of Hainault, tremble like an aspen leaf, whenever my boy-husband threatened to approach me!"

"Ay, my much honoured daughter," rejoined the prelate, with an unsanctified leer, "and no wonder you should shrink from the approach of

such a mere mockery of manhood. But how different now your lot! How different the gallant Glocester, when *he* comes towards you full of love—"

"Hold, my Lord Zweder! Another word like this—another look, irreverent in you or insulting to me, and that moment I break off this conference, cut short our project for ever, and return to my poor town of Amersfort, trusting my fate to Heaven!"

"Ay, Madam, it is this I was taught to expect—and it is for treatment like this I have risked my whole temporal good in your almost desperate cause! Thus your devoted vassals, your faithful towns of Holland and Zealand, your brave commons of Kennemer and West Frise are all sacrificed to a woman's caprice!"

"Ill-fortune has made me used to bear hard words," said Jacqueline, with a proudly dejected air.

"Cannot good sense teach you to value kind ones? Can you not—"

"Hark ye, my lord bishop! I came not here to harm my cause any more than to list your lectures. I would not do myself the ill to quarrel with you—so hear me! I am ready to complete my contract with Humphrey of Glocester, when God in his mercy shall take him that calls himself my husband, or the pontiff in his wisdom shall break the bonds he himself forged for me."

"Nay, this is well spoken; and more than this—"

"Ask me no more—my tongue will not play the hypocrite to my heart. I cannot list to words of love when Glocester is the theme. I love him not, nor does he love me. Motives of state, that join so many a prince and princess in unsuiting bonds, lead both of us to this marriage—nothing more. As Humphrey has valiantly fought for my poor cause, so shall I faithfully honour him. As he has gallantly sought my hand, so shall I give it him in gratitude and troth. But love! Ah me, I never knew it,

nor ever may I hope to know its charms! The lowliest wench that tends a peasant's swine may sooner prove the sympathy of heart for heart, than I, born to a state in which love is no denizen. And yet methinks, that had I—"

"Hark! look out, Madam!" interrupted the bishop, who had paid little attention to the faintly uttered musings of his companion's reverie. "Do you not hear the trumpet that was to signal their approach? Yes, there they come, two knights with their squires. It must be the duke and Ludwick Van Monfoort. Cheer up, cheer up, fair daughter, to meet your affianced lord!"

A brighter expression did for a moment lighten Jacqueline's face; but it was kindled at a source far different from the bishop's imagining. It was revived ambition that gleaned in her proud mind, and animated her fine countenance, at the prospect of meeting him, who had already fought for her rights and was now,

their chief hope. She rose from her seat, and, with somewhat of a woman's weakness adjusting her tresses and head dress, she advanced to the opening of the tent. There she was met by her own and the bishop's pages, with a young woman some half dozen years her junior, the most favoured and attached of the few maids of honour who had faithfully followed her vicissitudes, from the time of her unhappy marriage with her cousin-german, John Duke of Brabant. The pages were, like the soldiers and other attendants, in plain suits, unmarked by any badge or cognizance that could denote their service. The young woman was dressed much in the same fashion as the princess, except that the colours she wore and the adjustment of her hair were carefully suited to her still lighter complexion and the less serious expression of her face. A smile beamed on her lovely mouth, blushes covered her cheeks, and her slight figure seemed elastic with joy.

"Well, Benina," said Jacqueline, with a

composed air, "your duty of the watch is finished. Duke Humphrey comes to the rendezvous?"

"Yes, yes, Madam, look yonder through the vista towards the beach, and see them coming! They took us quite by surprise, notwithstanding all our vigilance. The little bark sloped round the jutting point of the bay by the north, while Hendrick and myself, with the bishop's page, the two halberdiers and the trumpeter, all strained our eyes towards the south."

"'Tis rarely, my good Benina, that love looks so wide of his mark! Nay, blush not more deeply, my poor maiden—thy cheeks were already sufficiently dyed in the colour of confession."

"Ah, Madam, spare me those words and looks! Be merciful to the weakness you have not hitherto reproved!"

"Reprove! Heaven forbid that I should! Were I thy rival, Benina, I should blame and

hate thee. But my envy of thy delight is that of ignorance not anger. Would that I, too, could feel my pulse throb and my brow flush like thine! Ah me! but it must be sweet to love and be beloved!"

"See, Madam, they approach—the duke and—"

"Thou needest not to announce the brave Fitz-walter, Benina—thine eyes have been the heralds of his coming. I wish thee all joy and happiness, my faithful friend!"

"And you too, my gracious mistress, will you not be joyous and happy? Oh! let your face be decked with smiles at last—you, who of all the earth most merit happiness, and, more than me, have right to hail it now. Yon gallant lover, the royal Glocester, comes to claim your plighted troth, while I, alas! have only hope and fancy to build on. Oh, cheer up, Madam, and meet the prince with smiles of welcome!"

Jacqueline made no reply to this warm-

hearted effusion, but stood with complacent gracefulness to receive the new-comers. The bishop also quitted the tent and advanced towards them; while the soldiers and servants formed in lines, to do them honourable salutation. As Glocester advanced he threw his large cloak to an attendant varlet, and discovered his manly figure, dressed in a plain close suit of Lincoln green, over which hung no ornament that might betray his rank; and his low round cap of velvet was simply adorned with a band of the same, fastened by a gold buckle such as any English gentleman might wear. A short dagger in his girdle was his only weapon; and it was but his princely mien and fiery glance that bore witness to the identity of the impetuous protector of England.

The companion closest to his side, and who bluntly did the office of chamberlain in presenting to him the obsequious bishop, was a man of middle age, middle stature, and middling manners, such as characterised the majo-

rity of the rude and independent nobility of Holland and Zealand in those days :—men, who to feudal power joined little of chivalric refinement; and in their isolated castles maintained a fierce war with their factious neighbours, or the towns which detested and struggled against their authority. Ludwick Van Monfoort was only distinguished from his class by a never-changing fidelity to the cause of Jacqueline, emulated by few of her titled vassals, in her unlucky wars with her uncle, John the Pitiless, secularized Bishop of Liege, whose recent death had restored her to those rights of heritage which his victorious iniquity had some years before wrested from her. This blunt warrior could not, on the present occasion, be induced to lay aside completely his warlike apparel. Beneath his russet doublet a slight hauberk of iron wire was partly visible; his long double-handed sword was slung by a brass-studded baldric at his back; and his head was covered by a close cap of red cloth, the dis-

tinctive mark of the *Hoeks*, the faction to which he belonged, in opposition to the grey bonnets of the *Kabblejaws*, who had been for nearly a century their inveterate enemies. In other respects the dress of this staunch adherent did not belie the nominal purport of his visit to the Zevenvolden; and his whole appearance formed a mixture of sporting, chivalry, and brigandage.

Close to Glocester, but not in a direct line with him, nor yet so much behind as to denote a servile station, walked a knightly looking man of about thirty, which was exactly five years below his own age, in a similar costume to his, and with that peculiar air which has in all ages been distinctive of an English noble. A few paces behind was a younger man, whose rougher aspect, coarser apparel, and measured attendance on Van Monfoort's movements, spoke him a squire suited to such a knight.

"Welcome, most gracious duke!" said Jacqueline, as Glocester saluted her, with the

ceremonious courtesy prescribed by the strict rules of chivalry, but with none of the familiar warmth which might have been expected from a gallant prince to his affianced bride. "Let your heart interpret my gratitude for this new proof of zeal. I am a beggar even in words."

"Countess, I am here not less by inclination than duty," replied Glocester. "I owe it to my honour as well as to your misfortunes, to succour and cherish you at all risks. I have vowed my sword and my life to your service; and St. George be my warrant that I will keep my vow!"

The tone of this reply sunk into Jacqueline's heart. She had never felt towards Glocester as at that moment. When he had first espoused her cause and contracted a promise of marriage with her, she was a mark that any prince of Europe might have aimed at; and in the subsequent vain struggle against the united power of John of Brabant and Philip of Burgundy, her ambitious champion might have been sup-

posed to fight for her possessions, rather than her person. But now, when nearly all was lost, Hainault irrecoverably, and even Holland but partly held, and that by a most doubtful tenure, the unflinching perseverance of Glocester seemed perfect heroism in her eyes, and gave her, for the first time, the most delicious conviction a woman can feel—that it was *herself* alone that formed her champion's inspiration. She therefore answered in terms of still stronger gratitude; and then turned with graceful dignity, to acknowledge Lord Fitz-walter's respectful salutation, and the less courtly one of Ludwick Van Monfoort.

"In sooth, my lord," said she, "it spreads a gleam of joy across my mind to see his highness accompanied by so distinguished a follower as yourself. With such gallant support as you and my brave lion of Urk here, there may yet be hope of good."

Van Monfoort acknowledged his title, smiled grimly through his grisly beard and thick mus-

tachios, and shook his shoulders with a peculiar twist, that brought his sword round and enabled him to clap his hand on its huge hilt.

"This be my pledge," said he, grasping the weapon; while Fitz-walter added a few words, in a tone of deep feeling, expressive of his devotion to Jacqueline's service.

"Thanks, my good lord," said she, "are the only guerdon which the poorest of princesses can offer to the bravest of knights."

"Oh, Madam, they are more, far more than I merit or expect," replied the Englishman, with much emotion; "but better days may be in store," added he, in a lighter tone, as if recovering from a too serious mood.

"Let us hope so!" exclaimed Jacqueline, "though alas! we may never see the like of those gay and happy times when merry England and his gracious highness here did more than meet honour to my small deserts. It is a poor return I now can make for all the courteous

gallantry lavished upon me then—a stolen reception in these wild woods, a sorry tent, and a mock hunting party, in lieu of a brilliant court, a splendid palace, magnificent jousts, and feats of chivalry."

"Countess," said Glocester, with a spirited air, "we are too much honoured in your service to feel aught wanting to ennoble it. Fitzwalter is ready again to put his lance in rest, and run a tilt in your cause, in a more glorious field than the narrow lists of Westminster or Windsor. Think no more of these child's sports—we must now turn our thoughts to manlier deeds."

"Ah, noble prince, my heart is full, and the sight of that now faded favour, which I see his lordship with constant gallantry still wears in his cap, recalled those halcyon days with a too acute remembrance. That favour, Lord Fitzwalter, marks an ungracious contrast to your fidelity—it changes its colour."

"Which I never shall, as heaven is my hope,"

said Fitz-walter, placing his hand on his heart, while Banina Beyling, who had stood timidly blushing behind her mistress, felt her brain turn, as she almost sunk with excess of happiness.

"Come forward, Benina," said Jacqueline, "and take Lord Fitz-walter into your care. She will, I warrant her my lord, give special heed to your discourse, for England's sake and for your own, though her gratitude may not be garrulous. Van Monfoort, tend well this gallant lord, he shall be in your charge to-day. My page, and my lord bishop's here, will do the office of chamberlains in this our Court of the Zevenvolden. Now, gracious prince, come with his reverence and ourselves into our sylvan closet of council. Alas! what bitter mockery does fate make of princes and their pomp!"

These concluding words were uttered in a tone of deep sadness, that suddenly broke down, as it were, the forced gaiety of the sentence or two which preceded them. The lovely speaker,

whom misfortune had taught to moralize, entered the pavilion followed by Glocester and the bishop, while Fitz-walter and Van Monfoort, under Benina's auspices, took possession of another tent, hastily thrown up within a short distance, but just out of hearing of that conference on which the more elevated triumvirate immediately entered.

## CHAPTER II.

The bishop, a selfish person, quite unconscious of his own insignificance and dulness, began the discourse; and feeling himself, as it were, at home, did the duties of host, as such men always do, by placing themselves and their affairs in the post of honour. He seated himself in his cushioned arm-chair, and in the elation of the moment, forgetting decorum, and *almost* servility, exclaimed,

"Ah, this is a proud day for Zweder Van Culemborg!—most royal protector, my delight

is infinite to meet you. How the rebellious citizens of Utrecht must quail and accept the commutation—ay, and doff their greasy caps, with thanks to my lowest proctor. When does your highness's noble domination reckon on the arrival of your forces? Ludwick Van Monfoort tells me bluntly they are coming, but says not *when*. How many thousand heroes do you bring to our aid, most princely protector?—you make your first advance on Utrecht, eh? Ah, let the base burghers quail!—ungrateful slaves, who would not add a ruby to their prelate's mitre, nor a doight to their prince's revenue, nor a—"

"Before Heaven, Madam," said Glocester, abruptly, "your reverend ally here, unlike the Genoese bowmen at Agincourt, does not let those he came to aid take the front of the battle!—he leads the van more like a principal than an auxiliary. May God and St. George guard me well, but I thought I came here to serve your cause against perfidious Burgundy, not to fight for this holy suffragan against his

beggarly parishioners. How is this, fair countess?—or, mayhap, your reverence will set me right?"

While Jacqueline answered Glocester's sarcasms by a smile, and threw a glance of ineffable contempt at the churchman, the latter, recalled to a sense of his indelicate egotism by the duke's reproof, muttered a not very satisfactory commentary on his former text.

"Your highness marvels," said he, "that I should touch first on what seems my own interests in this conference. But wherefore, let me ask, is it wondrous that I should be moved by the impulse that regulates all men—ay, and all women, by this fair lady's leave? Suppose I do think of myself, why not? Do I not risk all to serve our common cause?—and why should *my* good alone be overlooked? Why should the Bishop of Utrecht be forgotten—at least by him who wears the mitre? No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth it, and cherisheth it, says St. Paul."

"Nay, countess, with your good leave," said Glocester, intercepting the indignant reply which had begun to speak in Jacqueline's looks. "I will briefly answer the worthy prelate's questions, and speak to this matter as seems meet. And first, be it known to your reverence, I am no polemic, nor can I quote scripture, though worse than either of us has done so before now. Moreover, I tell you frankly that I am no friend to alliances with churchmen; one bishop has been the bitter foe of the countess here, pitiless John of Liege, whom neither religion nor relationship could appease. Another has been the bane of my life, as well you may know, pernicious, wanton Winchester!—and, without undue offence, I see nothing good to be gained in a league where selfishness holds the first place."

"But listen, my lord duke, awhile—"

"Let me tell you, prelate, that Humphrey of Glocester is used to be listened *to*, not curbed, in speech or action. Nor shall any

priest dictate what even froward Beaufort dared not!"

"By St. Willebrod, the patron of my see, if your highness takes so high a tone with your friends, your enemies may well, I trow, call you imperious and irreverend!"

"My *friends!*—Hold there awhile, good Bishop, nor speak too rashly. I am quick to give enmity, but slow in lavishing regard, particularly to those of your cloth. I do not mean that hunting suit, which, 'fore George, I honour more than sacerdotal robes."

"'Tis you who speak too rashly, lord protector. Nor is this fit discourse from layman to a priest; nor, let me add, of likelihood to serve the cause you boast of being pledged to. My crosier to a lame man's crutch! Is it thus I'm to be treated? Madame Jacqueline, do I deserve this from your friends?"

With these words the bishop rose from his chair, and paced the tent in much perturbation; while Glocester sat quietly, enjoying the storm

he had raised. Jacqueline, little less gratified at his free treatment of the selfish being (who only received back what he was himself too ready to ready to deal out to others when he dared), yet feared that a premature breach might follow the too-marked expression of Glocester's fiery contempt. She, therefore, in a soothing tone, entreated the bishop to remove his seat; and by a persuasive look shewed the duke her wish that he should make some amends for his abruptness. He quickly complied, and said—

"Come, my lord bishop, be not too quick to take offence. Let this pass, and we will talk more coolly. But, by the rood, it moved me to hear you begin our council with what should have come last in order."

"Well, let it be not revived," said Jacqueline, interrupting the prelate's reply,—"you are both friends now, and must, for my sake, make allowance for each other's way of thought and speech. Be satisfied, reverend Sir, my good ally!"

"Blessed be the peace-makers!" exclaimed

the hypocritical retailer of the apostle's dicta, resuming his seat, quite satisfied to brook the sallies of so powerful a censor as England's protector, and thinking he had shewn sufficient spirit at his rough usage.

" Now let us, my good lords, come calmly to the matter of our meeting," said Jacqueline, " and discuss, in serious mood and measured phrase, the subjects we have so much at heart. Remember we are about to cope with a mighty antagonist; and, for the love of a righteous cause, let us mutually add to each other's strength, by bearing with each other's weakness. For you, bishop, and me, we uphold each our own interests in this quarrel; for should the tyrant, Philip, crush me in this struggle, you too must become his victim. But let us bear in mind that this noble prince espouses my just but almost desperate cause, and therefore acts in yours from motives alone of generous devotion. Let our gratitude—"

" Noble and beauteous Jacqueline," inter-

rupted Glocester, "let no more mention of that word put shame upon my feeble efforts."

"Nor need we overstrain his highness's pure motives," chimed in the churchman, with a sulky and envious sneer; "pledged by the honour of knighthood in your cause, and bound by the holy ties of affianced faith, methinks the hoped-for enjoyment of your various counties of Holland, Zealand, and Friesland, to the north, with the contested claims for Brabant and Hainault, to the south, besides the succession to the Bavarian fiefs, which, on the death of your noble mother, Madame Marguerite, must be yours in virtue of direct inheritance—methinks all these, with the possession of a bride so beautiful, as it needs no flattery to pronounce you to be, are enough to urge on this puissant prince, without seeking to prove him influenced by super-human virtue."

The prelate's eyes being, as usual, fixed on the ground, he did not see, as Jacqueline too quickly did, the rapid flush that spread over

Glocester's brow during this speech, nor the impetuous movement which impelled his open hand against his forehead, nor the forcible compression of his lips, all speaking an inward struggle of no common kind. Her sensitive mind, accustomed to disappointment and deceit, read a volume of evil import in these omens. The current of her words seemed checked; nor did the duke give utterance to a single phrase. The bishop, who expected interruption at every point of his verbose speech, looked up in surprise, which become instantly triumph, when he saw the evident confusion of Glocester's looks.

"Nay, nay, your highness," said he, with a patronising tone, "take not my words too much to heart—I meant not to mortify you, but to shew our fair ally here that I can probe the recesses of men's minds, and sift the secret motives that impel the acts of all. Noble prince, be not cast down."

"Tut, tut, good priest," said Glocester, impatiently repelling the hand which the bishop

placed on his, "waste not your words, nor wear the day in child's play like this. I tell you, prelate, you know me not; nor could the cunning of all earth's hierarchs unravel the mystery of my present thoughts. A baby's hand may strike deep discord from a ghittern's strings. Even so have your foolish words jarred on the feelings you could not play upon. Enough then!—Time presses, and each man's deeds must now be the interpreter of his motives. Fair countess, pardon me for being a moment turned aside from your especial converse—I play the gallant badly, and perhaps the statesman worse! Nature made me hasty, though not heedless, as you shall find ere long."

"Princely Glocester," replied Jacqueline, "I may not read your secret thoughts, but I can divine the causes that affect them. Lack of happiness sharpens the mind's eye, as want of sight quickens the blind man's touch. Then hear me now at this outset, ere one irreparable step be taken in our most perilous enter-

prise. If, as I fear me, you repent our mutual pledge, if a realm's good is risked by it, if your great brother Bedford, trammelled by Burgundy, looks on our union with an ill eye, as marring mightier plans of state—this moment I release you from your vow, and will dare alone the manifold dangers of my quarrel. Speak to me frankly, freely, without set phrase, or courtly guile—I wait for your reply."

"Madame Jacqueline!" exclaimed the bishop, in cruel perturbation; "Countess! for the love of the saints—in the name of the holy martyrs, I conjure you to recal these ruinous words! Duke of Glocester, I must not let you answer! As a prelate of the holy church, as a protector of this princess's rights, I put a bar upon your speech, if it would violate a sacred engagement, on which my whole—that is to say, on which *all* our safety depends! Oh, woman, woman! what little wisdom did the fruit of knowledge give you!—when, indeed, will you bruise the serpent's head?"

While the reverend speaker once more started from his chair, paced the tent, and rubbed, or almost wrung his hands with agitation, Glocester continued seated, and looked firmly on Jacqueline, during both her and the bishop's harangues. When the latter had subsided into interjectional murmurings, the duke calmly spoke.

"If," said he, "I had wanted proof of Jacqueline of Holland's magnanimity, or sought a contrast between woman's greatness and man's littleness, St. George, have I not them before me! But I needed not this. From the day on which you, too beautiful Jacqueline, sought the court and the protection of my late brother, Henry, whom the King of kings assoil! to this present eventful hour, I have known you for all that is great in spirit and virtuous in heart. I have sworn my life to your service, and no mortal power shall make me swerve from that great duty. It is true I am thwarted in my ardent wishes. When Henry lay on his death-bed,

almost his last request was that I should not quit England more, nor embroil myself in the quarrels of France. But I did not heed the dying weakness of even a hero like him. I judged for myself, invaded Hainault, fought for, and lost your cause. Now, Bedford, great and good as he is, reiterates the vow of our royal brother, and urges me, by all the interests of the realm, to abandon you and rest at home. But the wishes of a living regent restrain me no more than the prayer of a buried king, even though Burgundy and Britanny, those intriguing dukes, have gained all Bedford's confidence, and make my conduct the pretext for loosening the ties that bind them to the cause of England. Again, old Winchester, that pieled prelate, that manifest firebrand, whom our late King Henry hated as I do, who never put foot in church but to pray me mischief, he, with some factious lords, dares implicate my motives, in making your cause my own, and fulminates anathema and ban against me on the head of it. But

nought shall stay me while I wield the power of England, till my young nephew, Henry VI., may take the reins of state, or till death strikes the sword of office from my hand. Three thousand gallant soldiers, men at arms, bill-men, and archers mixed in due proportion—are now on the sea, and, ere three days, they must, if God keeps the wind in its present course, be landed safe in Holland."

"Praise to the Lord of Hosts, and may the wind hold westwardly!" uttered the bishop, at the same moment thrusting his head out of the tent, and raising his palm towards the favouring point of the compass. "May St. Peter blow a strong breath into the canvass, and the Virgin sit at the helm!" continued he, turning again into the tent and laughing outright with joy, on feeling the light breeze which crept gently up from the Zuyder Zee into the forest. "Oh, brave Glocester, how I honour you! Ha, ha, Burgundy! you are forestalled at last. What will the schisma-

tic chapter of Utrecht say now, when they see the heroes of Agincourt level their pikes, and bend their bows, and point their culverins at my side! Ha, ha! ha, ha! Ah! my fair countess, did I not bid you be of good heart? Let the Zerem Volden ring with joy!"

"By St. Paul, I could almost laugh myself, at the antics of this mitred mountebank!" said Glocester, in a half whisper to Jacqueline, as the bishop walked up and down. "'Tis pity he has not a cock's-comb in his cap. No, no, he will not suit our alliance, countess. His mummery reminds me of Judas in the miracle play, which they acted for us at Windsor."

"He may be most useful though not disinterested," said Jacqueline, in the same tone.

"*Use* him, then, but trust him not," rejoined the duke. "I am no astrologer nor cabalist, nor know I the grand magistery; but King Alphonso's three-sided chrystal is not wanting, to shew me that this priest will as surely betray us as it may answer his ends to do so."

"Well, your highness," asked the bishop, coming forward, "what say you to the countess?"

"Something trite, and more true than your last homily, I'll 'gage for it," answered Glocester.

"Whatever your princely protectorship pleases," said the obsequious priest. "I begin to see your humour, and will let it pass. What more does it now suit your highness to communicate to Madame Jacqueline and myself?"

"I tell you honestly, prelate, somewhat to her I would not trust to you."

"And well that may be, from a lover to his betrothed. Would you that I should walk abroad awhile?" said the prelate, with a significant leer.

Another gloomy blush and frown passed over Glocester's brow. Jacqueline saw it, with pain and pride. She felt her colour rise as her heart swelled; and she rapidly said,

"Duke, have we more to hear of your de-

sign? If so, his reverence may again be seated —if not, let us seek the greenwood, and try the fortune of the forest."

"In sooth, fair countess, I have not more of moment to communicate just now; but this, which you may kindly construe as important— I must return this night to England."

"Return this night to England!" echoed the bishop.

"To England?" said Jacqueline.

"Ay, by my faith! and sorely against my will. Would I might dare to stay, and at once peril my life in this contest!"

"What! will you not fight, then, in this cause—not lead your troops to quell my factious citizens?" asked the bishop, with panting anxiety, while Jacqueline silently gazed on Glocester.

"Reverend count," said the latter, "I may not lead the troops even in a better quarrel. But I *will* fight, ay to the death, or God abandon me in her just cause! Know, Madam,

that my duel with tyrant Burgundy is all decided on. His last acceptance of my terms of combat reached me four days gone, ere I quitted Westminster. My brother Bedford is our umpire; the place of fight not yet arranged; the day not named. But in the interim, I am bound by solemn pledge of knighthood to hold myself unharmed, to take or give no 'gage of combat with another, to keep my body whole for my opponent's revenge, and to hold my arm apart from any less noble quarrel. Thus, then, it is. Lord Fitz-walter commands the coming troops—he being, by a different pledge, bound not to fight in person against Burgundy, but free to battle with all the world beside. My heart is in every blade, and my prayer for victory shall thrill in every bowman's string! That it may wait on these valiant legions, I shall daily visit the shrine of St. Erkenwald, our great city's patron, and ere long I shall myself, with the blessing of St. George, for England, and St. Michael for chivalry, do jus-

tice on the body of false Burgundy, and free you from your thrall. For the rest I arranged the whole plan of conduct with Fitz-walter and Van Monfoort, in the bold lion's den of Urk last night, and on our passage from the island to the main this morning. We will confer with them anon, if so it please you, Madam; and then I must away once more for England, to fit me for the issue of the coming combat with our deadly enemy."

"But, your highness," said the bishop, impatiently seizing the first pause in Glocester's speech, "you have not yet said one word of the main point of all—the contract—the marriage 'twixt the countess and yourself—"

"Hark! By St. Hubert's bugle, the hounds have caught the scent! Come, Madam, to horse, to horse! and one brave burst into the forest!" exclaimed Glocester, starting from his seat and rushing out of the tent.

## CHAPTER III.

The cry of the dogs, which had afforded Glocester so opportune an excuse for escaping from Bishop Zweder's persecutions, was indeed caused by one of the stragglers having caught the scent of a stag. When the duke sallied from the tent he saw every thing without in a state of anxious commotion; the brachs wildly strove to escape from the men who held them in leash; the greyhounds stretched their long necks, convulsively moved their pointed ears, and strained their sharp sight into the

wood. The horses neighed and pawed the earth, and the varlets and prickers looked anxiously for some signal that might tell them to begin the chace.

"Holloa! Fitz-walter! Van Monfoort!" cried Glocester, "out, out into the forest, there is a stag on foot—to horse, to horse!"

At the summons the two warriors appeared, with Benina and the pages, and all the attendants sprang forward to hasten every necessary preparation. The bishop somewhat astonished at Glocester's abruptness, came forward with a bewildered look as if he was more at fault than any hound of the pack; and Jacqueline never shewed so little alertness on hearing the music of the chace, though the horns flourished and the bugles blew in stirring discord, with the deep voices of the dogs. She grasped her bow, and slung her quiver at her back instinctively; but she thought only of the duke's strange manner, and his looks of deep confusion at every mention of the marriage-contract, still

more unaccountable when coupled with his solemn vows of devotion to her cause. While she stood in the tent, deeply musing on this manifest inconsistency, Benina entered, astonished to find the countess the most backward of all who were to join in the coming sport. To her respectful and anxious expressions of this feeling, Jacqueline replied, that she had been taken by surprise, that she was not altogether prepared, but she assumed as light a demeanour as she could command, and quitted the pavilion.

"St. Hubert, be my guide!" said the bishop, in reply to some impatient remarks of Glocester, "if I ever dreamt of taking horse to-day; otherwise, noble duke, a better stud should have been at your command. But choose among the half dozen—"

"'Fore George, it is such a choice as Satan had of the six sextons of Glastonbury—an unseemly set they are. What's here?—a roan gelding for the pack-saddle?—and this shambling

Flemish mare, fit for some fat dean of the *gilden* in a slow-paced pageant!—and this? *Vertu Dieu!* I'll not raise the foot-cloth, lest the carrion crows dart on their prey a week too soon! But never mind—let me mount this Friesland hackney, I'll warrant it he has a comely trot, quite equal to the speed of these yelping curs. Ah, prelate! I much fear me the breed of bishops is, like their studs and kennels, sorely degenerated since the day when these forests of Drent were granted to your predecessors, on the tenure of their hunting in them daily six months in the year."

"Let me hold your stirrup, noble duke, as your great-grand-uncle, the Black Prince, did for John, King of France, when he mounted his destere after the fight of Poictiers. Why, yes," continued the prelate, while he settled himself in his crimson-covered saddle, (Gloucester having declined his assistance, and standing waiting for Jacqueline's approach,) "yes, those rude churchmen you speak of, more

poachers than priests, readier to sound a horn than raise a chalice, to bend a bow in the forest than a knee at the altar, they are, thank Heaven! extinct; and in their humble successor somewhat of godliness may have taken place of gracelessness. Yet, still we hunt at times, my noble duke: and I, as Count of Drent, am bound to send yearly to my liege lord, the emperor, a certain tribute of sanglier's tusks, wolf's tails and orox' horns."

"What! have you still the orox in these forests? Methought they were quite rooted out, and nought more noble than a wild boar left, to give spirit to the chace."

"You are mistaken then, duke, for the great orox, auraux or urus, the hugest of the cow-kind, still exists; in small numbers, it is true, but enough to spread terror in the purlieus of the forest, as brave Van Monfoort here can vouch."

"I killed one not six months past, with the aid of four bold comrades," said Van Mon-

foort, "and your highness quaffed your posset cup at Urk last night, out of one of his horns."

"Indeed!" said Glocester. "That may be; but I heed not the goblet, gallant comrade, when the mixtus is good and the welcome cordial, as was the case at your hospitable home. But, here comes the countess."

He soon with due gallantry assisted Jacqueline to mount her palfrey, while Lord Fitz-walter did the same service to Benina Beyling. Glocester was greatly pleased to recognize their horses for two he had himself given to Jacqueline, and proud of the contrast they presented to those of the bishop's ill-furnished stud.

"By Heavens, Fitz-walter," he exclaimed, "it is glorious to see these bright creatures in the graceful attitudes of female horsemanship! How different from the unsightly display of women in Guienne and Britanny, who cross their saddles like coarse cavaliers!"

"Ay, or the ladies of Suffolk, whom the

'Boke of Bury' tells us were in a great vein for wearing breeches," answered Fitz-walter.

"What noble animals are those!" continued the duke. "'Tis kind, is't not, Fitz-walter? of the countess to let my poor present meet me here face to face?"

"'Tis like herself, a type of good taste and better feeling."

"Yet I, Fitz-walter, with such a prize within my reach—ay, in my very grasp,—I, like some base and burley clown, as if the blood of Plantagenet had suddenly frozen in my heart—"

"Hush, my gracious lord! nor let this deep emotion speak in your tone or looks—the countess waits."

"On, then! Let misery wear the mask of glee—and England's protector play the mummer!"

With these words Glocester urged on his little pony towards Jacqueline, and took his station at one side of her richly caparisoned pal-

frey; the bishop occupying the other, on the lean and long-tailed steed whose embroidered housings concealed a carcass that was scarcely libelled by the duke's ridicule. Resolved at once to conceal his own unquiet state of mind, and give no time for Jacqueline's observations or the bishop's untoward remarks, Glocester launched forth with assumed gaiety into all the rhapsody of a sportsman's delight, while the brachs were let loose into the forest, and began to give tongue as they caught the quarry's scent. He begged of Jacqueline to press forward; and she, nothing loth, soon entered into the fullest spirit of the scene. But the bishop found himself hard set to keep up with their increasing pace, and was too happy when the ill-trained pack very soon came to a check. Glocester, disappointed and disgusted with the unskilful display of both dogs and huntsmen, pointed out his displeasure in no set terms.

"Call you this hunting, reverend count?" said he, turning to the bishop, who was how-



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ever too far behind to hear him distinctly; "ah! well I wot me you had lost the spirit of the good prelate Palatines of old! Far other sport from this—if sport it may be called—would old Bishop Walter of Rochester, or Leicester's mitred Abbot afford, were we in their chace to-day. Did ever a man see such bungling grooms as those? What whooping and hallooing! What rioting and railing! And St. Hubert save us from such dogs—such babblers and skirters! Ah, Countess! when we roused the hart-royal from his lair in Sherwood brakes, and you honoured me by mounting this palfrey for the first time, we had different sport from this."

"'Tis true, my lord, that England takes the palm in sylvan sports," said Jacqueline, coldly, and somewhat piqued, both at the sorry exhibition of the bishop's pack and the duke's blunt censures, while he, heedless of their effect, called out impatiently in his native tongue—

"God's pity, Fitz-walter, but it maddens me

to see these bungling loons so mar our chance of sport! Ah, were the masters of my stag-hounds, Dick Lazenby, or Gervaise Gwynne, to the fore to-day, with Merkin, Grappler, Pillager, and half a score couple more, what work should we have! Do, good Fitz-walter, yourself lay on those hounds. Let them draw up the wind—let them strain on a good vent, hold high their heads, and like the horses of the sun run all abreast!"

While Fitz-walter cheerfully obeyed, the duke addressed Jacqueline.

"Now, Madam, you shall see if aught is to be done with his reverence's mongrels, for if any man can make them hunt, Fitz-walter can."

"Are English nobles wont to do the duties of huntsmen?" asked Jacqueline, somewhat sharply.

"Yes, countess, and at times the deeds of horses," replied Glocester, rather sternly; "and know ye, Madam, that he before you is Lord Warden of Windsor Forest, Woodward of the

vert and venison, with verderers, foresters, rangers, serjeants and yeomen prickers, all in his command? Right, good Fitz-walter!—on, brave warden!" added the duke, again in plain English,

"'Like the bold hunt, which rathe and early rise,
His bottle filled with wine in any wise'—

How go the rhymes?—what's next? Ay, ay—

——'The mellow horn to winde,
The stately harte in frith or fell to finde.'

Well hunted, gallant knight!

'Blow your horne, hunter,
Blow your horne on highe;
In yonder wood there lies a doe
And she is loth to die—
So hunter blowe your horne!'"

"And what thinks your highness of our dogs? Are not these spotted brachs rare animals?" asked the bishop, who had now come up.

"I fear me I have told my thoughts too freely," said Glocester, with a significant look

towards Jacqueline; "but a grain of truth in the greenwood is worth a pound of flattery in the court, as our old proverb says. Countess, you forgive my candour?"

"Would that it spoke out more plainly!" said she, with a sigh; but she instantly recovered herself, and added, "yes, duke, I most fully pardon your censure of our imperfect sport, provided you do justice to our wish that it were better."

"Better!—how—what—why?" said the bishop. "Can better hounds be than these spotted brachs? Why, they are famous—does not your highness think them choice? What better sort could be?"

"My good bishop, I may tell you in an English rhyme, which the countess will understand, though you may not;—

'So manny menne, so manny mindes,
So manny houndes, so manny kindes'—

and many a one, to my mind, is better than

your spotted brachs. We have for instance, our southern hounds for strict training, our northern for fleetness; the white stag-hound, good at stratagem from his abundant phlegm; the black, with great memories; the brown for courage; the yellow for perseverance. There are leymmers and hariers, gazehounds, and grey-hounds."

"Well, very well!—set aside the rest, and let's look to the greyhounds. Where can you match me this grand Albanian breed?—Are they not the true model of a greyhound? Are they not the real sort so vaunted by Zenophon in his treatise on hare-hunting, and by Arian in his book on coursing?"

"By our Lady, bishop, you puzzle me sorely now! I am no clerk, and know nought of those worthy sportsmen whose writings you quote; but if they will match their dogs, be they of what breed they may, against some I am ready to produce—"

"Nay, duke, one of those authors wrote

eighteen hundred years ago, and the other, Anno Domini 150 !"

" Even so, even so; I answer them and you with some couplets from as prime a scribe as either, and this is the true picture of a good greyhound:

> ' Head like a snake,
> Neck'd like a drake,
> Back'd like a beam,
> Sided like a bream,
> Tailed like a rat,
> Footed like a cat,'—

and such meant the princess in ' Sir Eglamour,' when she promised a present to her knight.

> ' Syr, if you be on huntynge fonde,
> I shall you give a good greyhounde,
> That is dunn as a doo;
> For as I am true gentylwoman,
> There was never deer that he at ran
> That might escape him fro.' "

" Hark ! hark !" hallooed Fitz-walter. " Away ! there goes a stag, by St. George !"

" Nay, he is not worth following, countess—

not he, Fitz-walter," cried the duke; "he is but a knobler, or at best a brocket."

"Did I not know the keenness of your highness's eye, I should say a staggart," said the lord warden.

"A butt of malmsey to a cross-bow, 'tis at the best a brocket!"

"I yield to your highness."

"Yet I might not be able to decide the wager, Fitz-walter, for there goes the quarry full speed down the wind; and with these running curs we may never hope to chace him again in view."

While the duke and his noble followers thus argued the identity of the young stag, in his different stages of growth from one year up to four, Jacqueline, less technical, but more alert, quickly drew a shaft from her quiver, placed it steadily in her bow, threw the light rein, garnished with silver bells, loosely over her arm, and taking prompt aim, as the frightened animal bounded through the forest, a few roods in front, she sent the arrow unerringly to its

mark. It entered the neck, close to the shoulder-blade, a sure and deadly wound, as was made evident by the immediate limping paces which succeeded the former graceful boundings of the now "stricken deer." Exclamations of applause burst from Glocester, Fitz-walter, Van Monfoort, and the bishop, while Benina uttered a laugh of triumph at this new proof of her noble mistress's wonted skill; and the huntsmen instantly laid on several of the hounds, which were sure ere long to overtake the prey, had they only tracked by the blood that trickled from its wound.

"My lord, I honour your prudence and policy," said the bishop, approaching to Fitz-walter, while Glocester complimented the countess;—"a true courtier is never wiser than his master, or he is a fool for his pains."

"And how, my lord bishop, have you found out that rare quality in me?" asked Fitz-walter.

"Tut, tut, my good lord; what man of sense would forfeit his patron's favour for proving

that a stag bore an antler more or less on its horns?"

Fitz-walter smiled contemptuously; but Van Monfoort, who stood close by, holding his horse's rein, exclaimed, "I'll tell you a thing, Bishop Zweder; you know as little of the bold candour of chivalry as this English earl does of the guile of priestcraft; and I prophesy that your cunning ways will lose you more than they ever gained. Beware lest the Canon of Diepenholt slips in between you and the chapter, while you think you manage them so well."

## CHAPTER IV.

Before any reply could be made to De Monfoort's blunt speech, the whole company were filled with some astonishment, by the appearance of two men, who suddenly came from the thicket, in the direction which the wounded deer had taken, surrounded by the huntsmen and hounds, who had just before gone off in pursuit. One of the strangers was a young man dressed in the fashion of the Frisons. A small and low-crowned hat of brown cloth allowed a profusion of thickly-curled chestnut hair to escape

and fall about his shoulders. His green vest was fitted with short, wide sleeves, puckered into several plaits, under which appeared others of leather, tight to his arms, and reaching to the wrist, where they closely fitted, without band or buckle. His ample *bracca*, or *hauts-de-chaussées*, of the same stuff as his vest, came down nearly to his knees, above which they were confined by a running string, and below them were tight pantaloons, like his under-sleeves, which shewed the form of the legs down to the ancle, where they terminated. A chanasure, half shoe, half sandal, covered his feet, tied with leather cords. In his whole dress there was not a single button, the use of which (in more modern costumes) was supplied by various strings and small brass buckles. Besides the bow which he carried in his hand, and the quiver slung at his back, a short straight sword was suspended from his girdle. Although not more than twenty-two, or twenty-three years old, he joined to features of fine expression an air of manly intrepidity;

and would have appeared tall and robust beside any other figure but that of his companion.

That other, a perfect giant, stood a full head taller than him. His dress was nearly of the same form, but of much coarser texture; the juppon, or close vest, being of dog's-skin, the laces of his thick sandals reaching in transversal bands up to his knees, and his head, in lieu of hat, or bonnet, being solely garnished by a clotted mass of thick red hair, rolled up tightly on the crown, and fastened with a catgut tie. Stuck in his belt was a long-bladed knife, with a stag's-horn handle. He carried in his hand a weapon called in these times a *torquoise*, a simple club, converted into a formidable mace, by the addition of eight or ten iron spikes projecting all round its thickest end. The face of this man expressed a brute energy almost ferocious, and its deep lines proclaimed him half a century old. His small grey eye sparkled beneath a pair of bushy red eyebrows, by which they were half hidden, and more than one scar added

new fierceness to his ungainly aspect. His left hand held the forelegs of the wounded an d stil struggling deer, which he had slung across his shoulders, and whose blood trickled down his arm from the wound in which Jacqueline's arrow was still fixed. A dog of immense size and savage mien, whose grey hair, tinged at the roots with red (the effect of the extravasated blood forced out by violent exercise), announced him to be of the real Pomeranian breed, trod close in his master's track. Unheld by leash or collar, he never attempted to run abroad; yet his snarling look and bristling back shewed the fierce passion which urged him to make war upon his less ferocious fellow-brutes.

"In God's truth, countess," said Glocester, as he surveyed the strangers, "yon giant with your brocket on his back, is not a bad copy of the Faunus and his kid in the statue gallery of the Louvre."

"Yes, and methinks his companion might have stood as a copy of the Acteon, which fills

the opposite niche," replied Jacqueline, gazing on the young man.

" 'Fore George, he is a comely youth. But how is it, my Lord of Utrecht, that you let armed archers and macemen traverse your domains? The forest laws of Drent are indeed lax, if pillers and poachers may roam into the very pathway of their Count. I'll question them. Holloa, good fellows!" continued Glocester, riding forward, " by what right do you pace these forests, bow in hand, and seize the deer of the Count Bishop, your liege lord?"

" As for the deer," replied the younger of the strangers, in better French and with a purer accent than the duke himself, " we picked it up wounded just now, and brought it in courtesy towards the sound of the hunting-horns. For the rest, we are now, as well as you, on the territory of Friesland, and you may know that it is the right of all free Frisons to carry arms when and where they please."

"For the love of our Lady," whispered the bishop, in considerable trepidation, "have nothing more to do with them! they are a race of men, or demons rather, who have killed more Counts of Holland, and have taken more Bishops of Utrecht than I have hairs on my head!"

"We shall see if they will not treat me better," said the haughty prince pressing forward. But the bishop caught his arm, and with an almost stifled voice, continued—

"For my sake, most potential protector, if not for the Virgin's, let them pass on! Oh, if I should be known to them, ruin may follow your imprudence. Duke! Duke! stand fast! It was on these very grounds that Florent the Second was murdered by Gambala, the free Frison!"

"Let me on towards the menacing hinds!" cried Glocester. "Down your arms, outlaws!" and with the words he placed his hand on the dagger, his only weapon, and urged on his

horse. The giant, for so he might truly be distinguished, immediately placed himself before his young companion, flung his dying burthen from his shoulders on the earth, and his rapid and piercing glance seemed to fly from the end of his mace to the duke's head, as if he measured the exact distance which the death-stroke would require.

"You are a dead man, if you advance, and our cause utterly lost!" exclaimed the bishop, seizing the reins of Glocester's horse and turning round his head. Then addressing the giant, he anxiously said, in the low German jargon,—"My worthy, my gentle friend, do I not know you? Have we not met before?"

"That may be, for I have been in many a fight, as you may read in my face," gruffly answered the man.

"And your name, kind comrade?"

"Oost, the dyke-digger."

"And *mine?*—you remember mine, don't you, my brave Oost?"

" I know nothing of you, and care less."

" Praise to St. Willebrod !—the wretch !" muttered the re-assured bishop, turning round towards Glocester, who had been held in check by the persuasions of Jacqueline.

" And you, young gentleman," said the prelate again, but in French, " methinks your face is familiar to me. You are of Amersfoot, Gauda, or Whecht, eh ?—You have seen me ere now, have you not ?"

" Nor you, nor any of your company—neither am I of the town you mention."

" And where do you come from—where are you going ?"

" We follow our sport in the forest, nor hold ourselves bound to answer inquiries as to whence we come or where we go."

" The Holy Virgin be your speed wherever you go, so it be not on our path ! On, on, my good youth—pursue your sport, and take your own way. Come along, Madame, come along your—highness !" continued the bishop, the last word in a whisper the very nadir to the title.

Glocester, however, gave little heed to these dissuasions. His choler, fiercely excited, seemed only to be appeased by the punishment of the daring outlaws, as he conceived the strangers to be.

"By God's grace!" cried he, "I cannot suffer this indignity. To be bearded by unmannered loons! Bring up yon lubberly halberdiers and seize these fellows! Have you no summary Court of Swainmote here to try and hang them on the nearest tree? Secure them, bishop, at least, and bear them off, before they escape into the thicket again!"

"For the love of Christ do not call me bishop!—speak lower, or let me be burgher, or master, or any meaner title," whispered the prelate, while Jacqueline said aloud—

"Nay, you have not much cause to think those men imagine flight. They stand with the sturdy air of honest independence, and it were shame to harm them. They may, too, be friends of my cause."

"Oh! were we sure of that," said the bishop, "there would be no objection at all to carrying them off, and punishing them for his highness's pleasure. But it is ten to one that every Frison is your foe—and most sure they are all *mine*. Therefore we must treat them civilly and discreetly—so prithee, noble duke, let them pass on their way, nor risk a riot. They may be backed by others, as I much suspect from their bold bearing."

"Whither go you, young Sir?" asked Jacqueline, in a gentle tone.

"That question I have already declined answering," replied the stranger, taking off his hat for the first time during the parley, and shewing his fine forehead and countenance to the greatest advantage.

"Your course seems bent towards Zealand. Party feuds run high in these divided countries, and I would fain know to which side you belong—you wear no badge."

"I would not have one seen;" rejoined the

youth, " yet I might be proud, fair lady, to bear that which should distinguish your friends and followers."

" Courteously spoken, by St. Paul! and with all the air and tone of gentle blood," said Glocester, who had been completely cooled by the bishop's amusing logic, at which he, Fitz-walter and Van Monfoort had heartily laughed, while Jacqueline had addressed the young man.

" I prithee speak him fair," said she again to Glocester. " Benina, is he not a noble looking youth?" she continued, while the duke approached him

" Princely!" said the maid of honour. " St. Mary grant that he may be a Hoek!"

" I never before felt the harshness of this bye-word of our cause—it suits well with the Lion of Hoek, or many another partizan, but sounds odious to designate a being like him," said Jacqueline.

" Would you he were then a Kabblejan?"

" Ah, dear Benina, name it not even in jest!—Hush! he answers the duke."

" Why should I not, Sir, if concealment serve my purpose? You and your company are all, like myself, in plain unliveried suits—yet I draw no inference to your disfavour," replied the young man, to Glocester's reproach that he seemed to court secrecy.

" Ah! Fitz-walter," said the latter apart, " is it not too bad to be thus twitted, and with truth, at this game of hide and seek? Is it meet that I dare not muster my blue-coated servitors even as when I drove old Winchester and his tawny backed varlets into the Tower? You speak with prompt and pertinent remark," resumed he to the young man; " let us at least know whom we have conversed with—what is your name?"

" Sir, I have yet no name—although I bear my father's. But of my own I have yet to earn the title; and when a fit day comes I will not shrink from proclaiming it, to any who dares to question me."

"'Sdeath, Fitz-walter, is it not hard that I may not throw my gage to this bold boy?"

"Your highness needs not such dishonour; he shall have mine. There, my young Sir, I fling you *my* defiance; and tell you that if occasion ever offers I will pluck your secret from your very heart, if your lips refuse to reveal it."

The young man calmly took up the glove which Fitz-walter had dashed on the ground; and drawing off one of his own, he threw it with less violence close by the feet of the challenger's horse.

"So far, Sir, we are on equal terms," said he. "I cannot ask a name while I am not free to give my own. But know you, you have not to deal with an ignoble man, nor one that may not make you eat your boasting words, as, by the Virgin and my Lord St. Andrew, I here pledge myself to do, and to dye that faded favour in your best blood, if ever we meet in open lists or fair-fought field!"

"Enough said! It is a wager of battle—I witness the pledge, and offer myself for umpire," said Glocester.

"Would that the day were come, to be honoured by such a judge!" exclaimed Fitzwalter.

"Day and judge are to me alike indifferent," haughtily observed the stranger.

"What an insolent rapscallion!" muttered the bishop.

"I like him not the worse—they were my own words in reply to Philip of Burgundy's challenge," said Glocester.

"Well, well, my fine fellows," cried the bishop, "ye may now follow your course; and may God have you in his keeping, young man, to prepare you for the lance and battle-axe of this right worthy gentleman!"

The stranger proudly moved on, followed by his stern companion; and as he passed by Jacqueline, he again doffed his bonnet, and made a low obeisance to her and Benina.

"I cannot let him depart in this ungracious way," said the countess; "Sir, let me thank your courtesy in having restored the quarry, which but for you were lost to us. Should we meet again, remember I am your debtor; and may St. Michael be your shield, when you redeem your pledge with yon redoubted knight!"

"An angel could not guard me better than such a prayer, hovering 'twixt me and Heaven."

"On, on to the forest depths! The day is going fast, and these hounds may mend their manners as the game is stirred," cried Glocester, urging away Jacqueline, who prepared to follow his summons, and gracefully bowing, turned her horse from the young man's side. But he, respectfully stepping before the palfrey's head, begged her to pardon his freedom in warning her of danger on the course they seemed bent on following.

"What, is there then indeed loose company in the forest? St. Willebrod protect us! I

thought so—I thought so—let's retire to the boats and sail away," cried the bishop.

"Is that the threatened danger?" asked Jacqueline calmly.

"No, Madam—at least not to my knowing," replied the stranger with a tone of offended pride. "But these gentlemen are little cognoscent of the forest, if they know not, that in this month of September, the straggling remnants of the Orox and Bonassus herds, come down in this very track to the sea-side, raging and furious."

"Holy martyrs! it is too true. This must be the very district called the wild-bull-chace—Is it so?" exclaimed the prelate, perturbedly.

"It is," said the young man, "and hark! may St. Andrew be my hold, if I hear not the snorting of the monster even now! Oost, heard you that?"

To this latter question in the dialect of Friesland the giant only answered by grasping the young man's waist, and forcibly lifting him

behind a thick clump of twisted oak roots, which presented the appearance of a natural redoubt. He then loosened his knife in his belt, but without drawing it, and grasping his mace in both hands he stood prepared, with that pale but stern anxiety which marks the face of the intrepid man, who knows his peril but fears it not. At the same instant, the horses and dogs, every one, startled and trembled, in the instinct of brute alarm. The very deer that lay on the ground in the last gasp of death, made a struggling effort to rise, and expired with a shudder of fear. In the next moment a roar of terrible depth resounded through the forest, and the monster which sent it forth appeared close to the group, crashing through branch and briar, with an air of savage majesty at once appalling and sublime. His height and bulk were enormous, double that of an ordinary sized bull; he was jet black, with the exception of a broad stripe of white running along his back, as was visible while he stooped

his huge head to the earth, butting against it, and tearing it up furiously with his short thick horns; while his eyes gleamed like fire-balls under the tuft of hair, curling garland-like on his front; and he lashed his long tail and shook his mane, that hung full six feet from his neck and swept the ground.

"Fly, fly!" cried the young stranger, as he drew his sword, and stood in the shelter of the trees; but his warning was not wanting to most of the party, and came too late to the rest. The huntsmen, acquainted with the terrible voice of the orox, ran in every direction, or climbed the nearest trees, even before he appeared; the dogs dispersed, yelping from fright, with the exception of that belonging to the dyke-digger, which stood close to its master, with trembling joints, but bristling hair, displaying, nearly as he did, a mixture of terror, subdued by resolution. The horses, one and all, reared up, bounded, wheeled, and attempted to gallop off; several of them succeeded in the attempt. That

which was mounted by Benina, received ample aid from its terrified rider, who gave a loose rein and urged it to its utmost speed. Glocester's pony and Fitz-walter's, stout, sturdy, and hard-mouthed beasts, completely mastered their riders, and carried them in different directions into the thicket. The hardy Van Monfoort, who was on foot, at the first alarm abandoned his horse, stepped up beside Jacqueline, and aided her in holding in her restive palfrey, but not with sufficient steadiness to enable her to dismount. The bishop, at the first curvet of his agitated garron, was flung sprawling into a tuft of blackberries, and his face and hands soon streamed with the mingled juice of the crushed fruit and his own blood, which the thorns profusely shed as he rolled himself deeper and deeper in the covering of the briars.

The first victim to the fury of the orox was an unlucky pricker, who slipping from the branch which he grasped, in an effort to mount an oak, fell to the earth, and was in a moment

lifted on the fierce animal's horns, and tossed bleeding and breathless to a distance of several yards; the prostrate ecclesiastic was the next object of attack. The monster bounded towards him with roars of increasing fury, mingled with which were the shouts of the observers, who thus hoped to distract his attention from the shrieking priest. As he sprang forward, a tree of full fifty years' growth met his career; he struck it with his broad front, and shivered it like a splintered lance; it fell right over the bishop's otherwise imperfect shelter, and by its shadowing branches saved him from destruction.

Jacqueline was now on the ground, and while Van Monfoort held the curb of the almost frantic horse with both hands, as a final means of turning the wild bull's rage, she placed an arrow in her bow, and (with a courage which on many as great a trial proved her one of the bravest of women) she scorned, or perhaps saw the hopelessness of flight, and discharged the weapon with a steady hand; it

struck the animal close to one eye, and broke against the bone. Irritated by the obstacles which kept him from the bishop, and inflamed by the smart of the wound, his long beard was now white with foam, and he darted with a tiger-spring full against the spot where the countess and Van Monfoort stood. The horse, which the latter still held, now burst from his grasp, and in a desperate plunge for escape, fell on his knees over the branches of the broken tree. The orox almost instantly transfixed him to the earth, and then gored him in a shocking manner, as he lay groaning and snorting with agony and fright. At this moment the young stranger, who, during the brief space occupied by the appalling scene had been held in his giant companion's grasp, succeeded in breaking from it, and sprang to Jacqueline's side. Spurning all false delicacy or forced reserve, he caught her in one arm, and made an attempt to bear her away towards the clump whence Oost had followed him, while Van Monfoort, with more

respect, but equal valour, covered their retreat, and stepped backwards after them, his huge two-handled sword pointed towards the pursuing orox. The young stranger, whose keen eye looked around at every step, saw now there was more danger in an attempted retreat than a desperate defence. He, therefore, turned again, and placed himself beside Van Monfoort, calling out to him to stand firm. The intrepid Ludwick stopped short, and answered by a cheering word. Oost stepped up a little, inclining in front of his companion, the dog flanking both. Jacqueline might have now fled with a fair chance of safety from behind this living rampart; but, from what occult sentiment or sympathy, we pretend not to decide, she stood still, encircled by the young stranger's arm, and seemed satisfied to share the peril which he had rushed into for her sake.

As the orox plunged towards them, with horns and visage streaming in the gore of the torn horse, Van Monfoort and the stranger op-

posed their swords' points to his broad front, and in the same instant Oost dealt him a terrific blow on the head with his mace. He might as well have struck against a rock; the iron points pierced, and perhaps splintered the bone, but the monster never swerved. He, however, raised his neck and head for one instant to its utmost height, either from the effects of the stroke, or to gain a better aim for the fatal plunge which immediately followed directly at the stranger and Jacqueline, for they formed but one mark. Oost stepped another step forward, and threw himself before them; there was but one blow between him and death. Stooping almost to the earth, against which the heavy head of his mace rested, he raised the weapon up with a fierce jerk in both hands, to the elevation of his own head, as he sprung erect to his full height. The descending muzzle of the brute, as it came down with an equal speed and tenfold force, caught the uprising blow. It was the vulnerable part,

the spot held by Mother Nature, as she plunged this monster and its kind in the exempting mould of its terrible strength. It reared up and tottered back; in an instant the swords of Van Monfoort and the young stranger were in its breast, and the more effective knife of the dyke-digger was deeply plunged into its throat; his dog at the same time sprang at its lip, and, with the sagacious tenacity of its breed, held down the animal to the earth, on which it sunk in a flood of gore. A shout of triumph burst from the victors, echoed by a scream from the bishop, who had just forced himself from his place of safety, and began to fly, why or where he knew not. But at this new sound, which he could not imagine aught but the monster's roar, he flung himself prostrate again, and would willingly, like the ostrich, have plunged his head into the earth.

The busy group of combatants saw that the business was over. Jacqueline, too, knew that the danger was escaped. Compassion was her first feeling.

"Fly, fly, Van Monfoort, and succour the huntsman, if he yet live!" said she.

Her next impulse was gratitude. She hastily untied the girdle from her waist, and turning to the young stranger, who left the completion of the butcher's work to his companion, she said, with brimming eyes and a trembling voice,

"Take this, wear it for the sake of her whom you have saved. Ask not who I am, but if the day ever comes when you discover it, remember that I shall value *this* as one of the brightest in a whole life of misfortune!"

"Beautiful and generous woman," cried the stranger, "I do not merit this; nor dare I accept a gift, lavished on one who may not venture to declare even his name."

"Keep it, keep it—my heart vouches for your nobility—quick, put it up! they come!"

The young man hastily tore open his vest and thrust into his bosom the girdle, much more precious from the manner of the donor, than from the intrinsic value of the embroidered

silk and the diamond aigrette by which it was adorned. But Jacqueline, whose eyes followed the movement, felt a thrill of disappointment and regret, at discovering on the breast of the stranger's inner doublet, the broad red cross of St. Andrew — the badge of the followers of Burgundy! She would have given worlds to have recalled her gift. It was too late. Van Monfoort and the bishop, with the wounded huntsman, were close by, and Glocester and Fitz-walter near in sight, the one having mastered and the other abandoned his horse.

The scattered elements of the late confusion now soon gathered round; and last of all came Benina Beyling, having recovered from the alarm which led to the abandonment of her noble mistress; and conducted by Gyles Postel, Van Monfoort's squire, who had joined her from the tent where he had been left, to prepare refreshments for the rest of the party. When she reached the spot of action she found Jacqueline standing with the Duke and Lord

Fitz-walter, the two latter busied in excuses for their involuntary evasion of the peril, and in lamentations for her slaughtered palfrey; to none of which she seemed to pay much attention, being more engaged in inquiring after the hurts of the wounded man. Van Monfoort was employed in examining the reeking carcase of the slain orox, while the bishop, after having wiped his face into a most sanguine exhibition, was in close conversation with Oost, who was occupied in cutting off one of the horns, the other being already stuck in his belt. The young stranger was removing the blood from his sword, with an apparent intensity worthy of a blade-polisher of Dinant or Liege; but Benina, who had a sharp eye in matters of feeling, thought she discovered a depth of expression in his face beyond the purpose to which he seemed so devoted.

To the bishop's urgent entreaties that the dyke-digger would give him or sell him the orox horns, he received a brief and positive

refusal. But when he at last appealed to the young stranger to persuade his follower to compliance, the request was compromised by Oost ceding one of his trophies. The other he handed over to his companion, with some solemn form of words, not comprehended by the rest of the party, but which the latter explained to the inquisitive prelate to be a rude invocation on presenting a drinking horn, as old as the early Barbarians, who had peopled these wild districts. The bishop, though but half satisfied, pulled from his girdle the leathern purse, which he had not lost in his late mishap, and offered some pieces of money to the dyke-digger, which the latter refused with an expression of savage scorn in his looks, and turned away as if he escaped from an insult.

A very few minutes more sufficed to finish the scene. The strangers took their leave and departed; Ludwick Van Monfoort having exchanged a cordial grasp of the hand with each of his late comrades in the common danger.

The Englishmen gave cold and haughty salutations. Benina smiled kindly on the young man; who was however astonished, hurt, and for a moment grieved, to see an expression of reserve, and almost he thought of resentment, on the beautiful countenance of her who had a few minutes before rewarded and thanked him as the preserver of her life. He felt, however, that he had then no possible means of exploring the mystery that surrounded her and her feelings; and he took his way towards the southern border of the forest, close followed by his huge attendant, and the dog, who threw many a longing look backward at the dead monster, as though he had not quite glutted his enmity.

The rest of the party did not remain long behind. A proposal of adjournment to the tent was quickly acted on; and a repast was soon laid out of materials brought the previous night, in the boats which had conveyed Jacquelina, the bishop, and their little suite.

The wounded huntsman was now placed on

board, together with the dead deer, which was proved to be a three year old, or brocket, establishing at once the quickness of Glocester's eye, and disproving the bishop's surmise, of Fitz-walter's sneaking subserviency. The skin of the orox and other records of the exploit, were also carried away; and the bishop boasted of the whole, and displayed the tribute horn which he destined for the emperor, with as much exultation as if he had really believed himself the chief hero of the day.

After a short discussion, Glocester set sail with Van Monfoort, in the skiff belonging to the latter, for his castle in the little Island of Urk; while the bishop, Jacqueline, and their followers, embarked on their return to Amersfort, accompanied by Fitz-walter, who was destined to take the command of the English troops, expected to land almost immediately in one of the islands of Zealand.

## CHAPTER V.

To the general reader, not familiar with the epoch of our story, a brief sketch of its history may be acceptable, in as far as it concerns the personages already introduced, or about to be offered to notice.

At that time, the first half of the 15th century, the power of the house of Burgundy was in rapid rise to the dominion which under Philip, surnamed "The Good," it acquired, and for a period of fifty years maintained. This greatest of the dukes of his race or title was,

at the date of the scenes recorded in the preceding chapters, in the prime of life and the full exercise of his vigorous ambition. He was a powerful and accomplished prince, a brave warrior, and a liberal patron of literature. Good fortune following, as it generally does, the march of cautious enterprise, seemed to take unusual pleasure in heaping its favours on him; but he, as is too often the case, abused his good luck by several acts of injustice and tyranny. The chief of these—by no means marked by historians with its merited reprobation—was the ungenerous perseverance with which he pursued Jacqueline of Bavaria, Countess of Holland and Hainault, his cousin-german in a double degree; his mother being sister to Jacqueline's father, Count William, and Jacqueline's mother, Marguerite, being sister to Philip's father, John Sanspeur, who was murdered in the year 1419, in the presence and by the authority of the dauphin of France, who succeeded to the title on the death of his elder brother, Jacque-

line's first affianced husband, and became subsequently Charles VII. A just principle of filial vengeance, which he however afterwards suppressed for the indulgence of more politic passions, kept Philip for several years in fierce hostility with the new dauphin, and made him at once the most powerful ally of England, and the deadliest enemy of France. In the wars of Henry V., his fidelity to that monarch was unflinching; nor had he yet swerved from that which he owed his infant son and successor, who was represented in France by his eldest uncle, the great Duke of Bedford, the Regent, at that time in the zenith of his fame for wisdom and valour, and unstained by the disgrace of having consented to, if he did not originate, the sacrifice of Joan of Arc, one of the truest heroines of history.

Philip was now the sovereign of Burgundy, Flanders, Artois, and several minor possessions; but his thirst for aggrandisement made him resolute on obtaining not only the neighbouring

duchies of Brabant and Hainault, but of extending his territories by the conquest of Holland, Zealand, and all the tributary provinces which stretched up to the Northern Sea. The marriage of Jacqueline, their hereditary countess, with John of Brabant an imbecile boy, was highly favourable to his projects, as it was an assurance that no heirs were likely to arise between him and the heritage to which he was next in succession. He therefore supported with his whole power the nominal husband against the ill-treated wife; and when, indignant at repeated outrages, she fled to England for protection, and became affianced to Humphry of Glocester, (also known in his country's annals as the "good Duke,") Philip supported John with a force too overwhelming to be resisted by the English prince, who, with his affianced bride, was driven out of Hainault, she taking refuge in Holland, and he returning to the duties of his Protectorate at home.

John the Pitiless, the secularized bishop of

Liege, uncle to both Philip and Jacqueline, one of the worst men of days too fertile in vice, had previously commenced a war against her, founded on a shallow pretext, and had, as before stated, defeated all her efforts for the defence of her rights, chiefly through the aid of the feudal despots with whom Holland abounded, and whose admiration of Jacqueline's fine qualities was overcome by hatred to her race, which had for several generations shewn a rare and generous sympathy with the people of the towns against the ennobled tyrants by whom they were oppressed. Jacqueline was forced to cede her rights to her atrocious uncle for the period of his life; but its termination, shortly previous to the opening of our story, reinstated her in the still imperfect possession of her inheritance. No doubt existed of the Bishop of Liege having died by poison; and opinion loudly pronounced the niece he had so injured to be the instigator of the deed. A gentleman of Holland, named Van Vlyett, a partizan of Jacqueline,

and one of the Hoeks, was tried in the summary fashion of the times, and executed for the imputed crime. Philip, who had succeeded by his uncle's will to the territories of Liege and other states, was not accused of the deed, which benefited him as well as her on whom the suspicion fell. The secret of this was the prosperity of the one and the misfortunes of the other; a rule which regulates through all the gradations of life and fortune, the praise or the obloquy of the world. Philip, however, soon obtained from John of Brabant, his impotent creature and cousin (for all the actors in this political drama were near relations), a commission empowering him to occupy, as governor in his name, his wife's possessions; and it was in virtue of this delegated authority that he now prepared to carry fire and sword into the last refuge which was left to our hapless but still undaunted heroine. To give a final sanction to his conduct, Philip had employed his utmost influence with Martin V., the recognised pope,

to refuse the divorce she solicited so urgently, and to annul the contract by which she had become affianced to Glocester. And to detach that intrepid but imprudent champion from her support, he had, with the assistance of the Duke of Britanny, gained considerable influence with the regent, who soon saw that Philip would sacrifice every feeling of friendship or fealty, in furtherance of his designs for still more general dominion. Hence the efforts on the part of Bedford to conciliate Philip, whose sister he had married, and to temper his brother's ardour, alluded to by Glocester in his conference with Jacqueline.

Another means resorted to by Philip to paralyze Glocester's exertions, more it is likely from cunning than courage (of which, however, he had a large share), was a challenge to single combat, on the grounds of some dubious phrases reflecting on his veracity, in letters from the latter. The whole correspondence is preserved by the chroniclers, and it bears evidence to the

talent of "the good" dukes, in maintaining their respective causes by the pen, and their readiness to defend them with the sword. Until the terms of the combat were finally arranged by a sort of general council, which, under Bedford's auspices, sat at Paris on the whole merits of the case, Glocester was, as he has told, prohibited from any personal efforts against his antagonist's cause or in Jacqueline's quarrel. He was supposed to be in England while he made his stolen visit, to explain his conduct and reassure the almost disconsolate countess; and while Philip, on his part, was in reality making the most vigorous preparation for the invasion of her possessions, he kept up, in his castle of Hesdin in Picardy, a shew of complete devotion to exercises fitting his coming duel, and to brilliant jousts and other sports, belonging more to chivalry than to actual war.

The affairs of France on the one hand, and the disputes in England between Glocester and the Bishop of Winchester on the other, gave

Bedford enough of concern and employment to prevent his interfering in the approaching contest between Jacqueline and Philip. To maintain the latter staunch to the English interests was the regent's chief object; and whatever his private sympathy might have been, his political regard was little likely to be excited for one whose unfortunate quarrel was shaking the very foundations of Philip's alliance, and involving all England in the peril she was about to incur.

Jacqueline was therefore, with Glocester's sole exception, unsupported by any foreign ally. Her most influential domestic one was the Bishop of Utrecht. He was forced into her quarrel by Philip's inveterate hostility to him, in consequence of his formerly opposing, from feelings of personal pique, John the Pitiless, who had used his best efforts, but fruitlessly, to prevent Zweder's election to the see, when he was but Dean of Osnaburg in Westphalia. Philip vowed that he would dispossess Bishop

Zweder, though the mitre should be placed on the poorest curate of Friesland, and had spurned some cringing efforts towards submission already offered by the prelate, who became also deeply compromised in a closer dispute with the insubordinate Chapter of Utrecht, which had gone so far as to threaten him with expulsion, on learning his overtures so scornfully rejected by the duke. It was then that he immediately turned round to Jacqueline's cause; and, as has been seen, made it his own—as long as was convenient.

Several of the other towns had with great spirit espoused the quarrel of their persecuted countess, and embarked their very existence in the same venture. Amersfort was chosen by her as her residence and the seat of her little court; where, aided by her mother, a woman of masculine mind and determined character, she endeavoured to organize the efforts of her friends into some serious display of preparation for the struggle. One of her

most active and most remarkable partizans was Rudolf Van Diepenholt, a man of good family, but merely an obscure canon, until he was fixed on by the people of Utrecht as a fit candidate for the bishopric, of which they were resolved to deprive the present possessor. Others of Jacqueline's supporters will appear incidentally during the progress of our story.

The ancient antipathies of the Hoeks and Kabblejaws had for the moment been agreed to be laid aside, at least as far as actual hostilities were a proof of hatred. A truce was established between them, and for a few short weeks no blood had been shed—a rare circumstance in the annals of a century—and the annual meeting for the exercise of archery, called *Jay-shooting*, (from the appearance of the object aimed at,) was about to take place at Tergoes, in the island of South Beveland, at which it was agreed to collect the sense, (so to call it,) of the conflicting factions, on the great question of sovereignty which now agitated the country.

These two factions, so often alluded to, had acquired their respective titles in a way highly characteristic of the rude times in which they flourished, and of the piscatory pursuits and habits of thought of the amphibious race to which they belonged.

During the contests for power, about the year 1350, between Marguerite of Bavaria, Countess of Holland, and her son William, grand-uncle to Jacqueline, some of their respective partizans, the most powerful men in the country, held a repast, at which a frivolous argument took place on the question, whether the Hoek (fishing-hook) might be said to take the Kabblejaw (cod-fish), or *vice versa.* A serious quarrel was the consequence of the dispute; the different parties affixed on each other the words which formed the matter of argument; distinctive badges were assumed; and the whole population, for full a century following, was divided into two desperate political sects.

It was thus that with all the barbarous hos-

tility of old times, a vein of rude humour almost invariably mixed. Political nick-names owed their application to chance, or some association connected with ridicule. Gueux, Roundhead, Tory, Whig, have no distinct signification as titles of powerful parties, and only give us notions of ignoble and vulgar factions. Leaguer, Conventicler, and a few others, vaguely mark the purpose of their partizans, but carry no moral meaning with them. It was sufficient for our forefathers thus to designate antagonist sects, and at most to fasten on them some title of burlesque. The more impressive epithets by which men now distinguish their opponents (such as radicals, corruptionists, ultras), are among the proofs of a more regulated energy in the human mind, or at least a more serious spirit in their hatred.

The chief leader of the Hoeks (who had all declared for Jacqueline, and who may be called the liberal party) was Ludwick Van Monfoort, whom our readers already know, a rough war-

rior and a bachelor, who, in his aversion to restraint, would not submit to even the silken chains of matrimony. The principal person on the opposite side was Floris Van Borselen, a married man, and the father of a family, who, like the rest of his party, was at once a slavish partizan of absolute right and tyrannical wrong, and in his domestic relations as thorough a despot as the master to whom he bent his knee. It is to the castle of this chieftain, in the southern point of the island of South Beveland, that we must now conduct our readers, and introduce them to both it and its lord, on the third day following the occurrences in the Zevenvolden, which occupied our opening chapters.

The castle of Eversdyke was a fair specimen of the structures which at that period abounded in the feudal territories of Holland, Zealand, and the neighbouring provinces. It rose on the edge of the Hondt, or West Scheldt, opposite to the coast of Eastern Flanders. The beach did not in that part present the, at times, pictu-

resque object of white and sun-gilt sand-hills. It was, like the greater part of the coast of the island, composed of a bank of brown, orange, or red coloured earth, which protected the naked surface of the *polders*,* and formed the only rampart between the sea and the rich pastures, and the flax plantations, the staple produce of the island. Beyond this dyke, which was of moderate elevation, extended a rude pier formed of huge black stakes, intermixed with pieces of rock, against which the angry waves broke and foamed unceasingly. Protected by this pier were generally seen lying at anchor a few heavy and flat-bottomed vessels, suited to the navigation of the shallow seas of Zealand. A large lock or basin completed this little harbour, and appeared intended for the occasional discharge of the waters from the plains beyond.

Close to this basin, so as to command the harbour, rose the square tower which composed

* The technical name of the low grounds immediately adjoining the dykes.

the principal feature of the castle. It gradually decreased in breadth from the foundation to the roof, and this mode of architecture, adopted for the purpose of strength, gave an air of greater height than the construction actually possessed. A narrow river bathed the base of this tower, which was only to be approached by means of a wooden draw-bridge, so rapidly inclined that the part next the edifice was full twenty feet higher than the opposite end, a precaution common to those castles which were so frequently exposed to sudden attacks from the pirates who infested the coast. The lower parts of the tower contained no windows, but were furnished with several narrow casemates, which proved, that in case of siege it was destined for the reception of the cattle and provisions of the garrison, who kept their quarters higher up. The upper parts were irregularly furnished with windows, great and small, and the building was crowned by a roof so pointed that the snows of winter never found it a resting-place.

The detached house, built of wood and clay, at times inhabited by the chieftain, with the outbuildings close under the protection of the tower, shewed nothing peculiar; nor did even the village of Eversdyke, a few hundred yards distant, on a somewhat sloping ground, a place of refuge, in case of inundation. The only striking objects around were the high signal masts called *bakenen*, on which the chieftains hung out their banner, when they took arms for the public cause, or in a private quarrel. But this old custom was now beginning to fall into decay, being superseded by the establishment of clocks, which called the vassals to arms, and one of which thrust out its grotesquely ornamented dial just under the roof of the tower; some huge nests of storks hanging at the other side, annually enlarged in their dimensions, and constantly occupied from generation to generation.

In one of the chosen chambers of this castle, Floris Van Borselen, its haughty master, and

his lady-wife, who was by birth, education, and feeling, a Frison, of noble, but we can scarcely say of gentle blood, occupied two unwieldy chairs of grotesque and comfortless accommodation, which were placed close to one of the high and narrow casements that opened to the westward; and they looked out over the rude outworks of the place, and on the ocean, which spread away to the not distant isle of Walcheren. But it was not on that ocean that their thoughts were fixed, nor did the little skiff which came dancing upon its waves from the main land which lay opposite, form the subject of their conversation. That turned on the probable fortunes of their eldest son, Vrank, who had been some years before launched on the wide sea of life, with prospects no doubt flattering, but on a voyage which experience told them was at the best exposed to difficulty and danger.

"My good husband and gracious master," said the dame, "I do yet think, with all be-

coming deference to your wisdom, that no cause of misgiving actually exists on that particular head. His letters, though few, are written in clear broad characters, and contain dutiful words for you and me, and due phrases of affection for his sisters and brothers: and he seems to manage well the honorable recompense of his calling, and to understand the honour which it confers, and he always invokes his patron's patron, my Lord St. Andrew, whom he has chosen, and whose badge he wears."

"My good wife," said Van Borselen, with an expression which was meant for a smile, but was much more of a sneer, "what has all that to do with the subject of our anxiety? Can the broidered badge of St. Andrew protect while it covers a young man's heart? Or will his duty to father or mother save him from the perils of a lascivious court, from the corruption that besets a traveller in strange countries, and the chance that he learns to forget, or what is worse, to despise his own?"

"Nay, but our dear son Vrank—"

"Is only a youth, and subject to youth's failings! That is my ready-made answer to your reasoning, wife. Seven years may have improved, but they have not been like to change him."

"Oh, I hope not!" said the partial mother.

"Well—I hope not, too," rejoined the husband, who was in a mood of unwonted mildness, "for when he left us he was a promising —a glorious boy, the pride of my heart, and Heaven grant he may yet prove the honour of our ancient race!"

"He will, he will! If ever youth came to grace and goodness, Vrank Van Borselen will —my dear, dear boy!" exclaimed the fond mother, wiping away tears of pride and joy, from cheeks that had furrows just deep enough to mark her on the middle road of life.

"Still, my good Bona, my worthy helpmate," said the father, with a voice less and

less harsh at every word, "there was in his disposition a fearful leaning to tenderness of heart, that unmanly weakness which leads some degenerate boys to love, ay even to marry, women other than those their parents prescribe for their wives."

"Oh, fear nothing—"

"I am not used to *fear*, good my wife; but if ever a child of mine—if ever even Vrank should so forget his due obedience to me, I swear, as I am a gentleman and a Kabblejaw—"

"Oh, my good master! do not swear, for I know your inflexible nature—Oh! do not suppose aught unworthy of our favourite child."

"Well, well, I will not swear—yet; nor imagine that worst of all evil. But I wish, oh, how keenly! that this boy of ours was once again back among the rude virtues of his native land, and free from the blandishments of those southern climes, where our hardy plants are withered, and the fruit becomes rotten before

it is well ripe.—What skiff can that be bearing this way up against the breeze? It has no pennant that I can see—yet it ought to be my brother James's too—Is it not? it stands over from Biervliet, and may bring news from Flanders. Would that it might tell me that young John Uterken is coming!"

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed the wife, "for then the war would be sure to begin again. Let us at least enjoy this little interval of quiet, and be content."

"Content! not I, by our Lady, till our foes are down, and that adultress, that poisoner, that female firebrand, cast out from the country!—Content! while the white flag flies on my limits, while my banner is not hoisted on the bakaner, while Zegher of Hemsted rides on the same path with me, and I may not draw my sword, but must doff my bonnet to him and the like!—Content! But our meeting at Tergoes to-morrow will end this inglorious state of things. Uterken and his brave Flemings

may arrive ere long, and the Kabblejaws once more throw up their grey caps for joy !"

As the chieftain harshly uttered these words he stalked along the narrow chamber, as if every stride were to carry him closer to his foes, or farther from the galling durance of inaction. Some further conversation, if so it might be called, when more than nine-tenths of the talk was on one side, brought the unequal colloquists not much nearer to an accordance of opinion. But the time it occupied allowed the skiff to approach very close to the beach which stretched under the castle ramparts. When Van Borselen had in some measure vented his stern humour, by bursts of declamation like those we have recorded, and which his wife attempted to soothe but could by no means control, he turned his attention again to the little vessel, now evidently steering for the rude pier, which afforded ample depth for small craft to run close under the mouths of the few culverins which garnished the rampart at its seaward face.

"It is, it is my brother's boat," cried Van Borselen. "There flies his green pennon, with the three silver stars of the Borselens, at the mast-head—and, eh? What! By St. Peter and St. Paul, the red cross of Burgundy on a white flag hangs out at the stern. This is good, this is good, this is good! The duke will not long tarry while his banner is in the wind. The skiff is moored—John Uterken in his boat-cloak steps ashore.—Let us receive the brave youth becomingly. So, so!"

With these words he reseated himself in his chair of state, and assumed a position as stiff and formal as it. With back erect, feet firmly fixed, and arms in a line with those of the piece of furniture on which he evidently modelled his attitude, he looked as calm and stern as Dutch gravity and feudal pride prescribed, and immoveably awaited the entrance of the young man, who now stepped quickly on through the various approaches to the main body of the building. The movements of Vrowe Bona Van Borselen were always more

rapid and detailed than those of her much older lord, even when going the same round of conduct, bearing to them about the proportion that the speed of the minute-hand did to that of the hour-hand on the dial of the castle clock. She therefore resumed possession of her oaken seat, with much quicker and more evident efforts at preparation for a suitable carriage during the coming interview. She smoothed her kirtle of thick brown samyte down over her knees, leaving only just enough of her legs displayed to shew the blue hose on her ancles and insteps, high upon which were the brass clasps of her untanned shoes. She next gave an additional pull to her girdle and fastened it into the buckle, advanced on her cheeks her plaited wimple of the fine and snow-white lawn called sendell, which was spun by her own maidens; then settling on her shoulders her tippet, handsomely embroidered in Ypres needlework, she hemmed and coughed and made some swan-like movements with her long neck, and finally ad-

justed herself in harmony with her husband's attitude, to which hers formed a suitable parallel. They sat there statue-like for some minutes, without deranging by the interchange of a word or look the rigid dignity of feature and muscle; though the quick-sounding steps, which echoed on the stone stairs and through the narrow corridor, proclaimed an unusual want of form in the visitor's approach.

And in a few moments more the door of the chamber was flung back on its clumsy hinges; and instead of displaying the formal figure of the armed pursuivant, or fat old chamberlain, who regularly announced all comers, and ushered them in between a file of serving men, the youth who had made such short way from the skiff to the audience-room, now stepped, or rather bounded forward, and advanced towards the stately couple, threw aside his cloak, took off his bonnet, and dropped on one knee. The quick sight of maternal love could not for a moment be dimmed by doubt. Vrowe Bona, for-

getting every thing but the hearty-yearning which for seven long years had been drawing her insensibly to this happy moment, started from her seat, as though an effigy had sprung from its pedestal, and indifferent to tippet, wimple, or kirtle, she threw herself into the open arms of her son, and kissed him, hugged him, and cried over him, in all the grace of natural ill-breeding.

Whether it is that a father's memory is not so prompt to recognize his child, or that the pride of a Zealand gentleman and a Kabblejaw triumphed over the parent's feelings; Floris Van Borselen did not follow his wife's example, but sat still in his arm chair, while she blubbered forth her welcomings, and stifled the replies that the affectionate youth in vain essayed to utter. During this struggle it was, however, evident that the chieftain knew his son, and that decorum held a terrible tussle with delight. His body moved not, but his knees shook, his hands convulsively grasped the arms

of the chair, his mouth was drawn down, his lips quivered, his eyes winked, and his whole countenance displayed that ineffably ludicrous expression which one sometimes sees in the weeping cherubs of a monument. Young Vrank saw his father's constrained emotion, and succeeded in approaching close enough to take the outstretched hand, which, for all its nervous straining, trembled as the youth respectfully pressed it to his lips. But the mother never quitted her son, but clung to him at the other side, and made him in fact, what a dutiful child morally is, the true link that joins its parents in a chain of love.

At this moment a perfect tumult was raised in the ante-chamber, and even at the very door of the *sanctum*, where no sounds but the measured accents of etiquette were ever before known to enter. A group of four or five children, boys and girls from the age of fifteen down to ten, had gathered in the corridor on hearing the arrival of their long-wished for brother Vrank.

The servitors too, old followers of the family, and more recent reinforcements to the household, who had all known or heard of their young lord's fine qualities, unable to resist the children's example, crowded after them and pressed forward; while the old governess, in her sendell coif and black hood, and the older chamberlain with grey head and wide breeches, threw their bodies as a rampart between their lord's privacy and the boisterous intruders, and spread their arms across the door-way to block up the passage.

"Let them all in, let them all in!" cried Floris Van Borselen, springing up on his feet and throwing his arms round his son's neck. "Let there be holiday and jubilee to all within sight of the weather-cock on the tower!—Oh!" continued he, as the children and servants rushed in, jumping, shouting, laughing, and weeping for joy, "Oh, that I, too, could dance and cry!"

With the lightning's speed the joyous feeling

ran through the castle. The rough watchman on the rampart, the guards at the gate, and the grooms in the court-yard, all caught the impulsion. The artillery sent out successive peals across the strait to the main-land beyond; and the very ban-dogs in the fosse seemed to howl in a unison of fierce but thrilling welcome, such as the grey walls of Eversdyke had not rung with for years.

## CHAPTER VI.

The scene just described will be evidence of the good reason which Vrank Van Borselen had to love and reverence his parents, who, let their peculiar dispositions be what they might, united much of that tenderness which was common to the unpolished but kindly people of Zealand. Vrank still remembered, in their fullest force, and was in a great degree ready to act on, the early notions of obedience which his father's very name inspired; nor had all the acquired polish of manner, which between six and seven

years' service under the Duke of Burgundy had grafted on his natural refinement of thought, weakened the influence of the associations which attached him to the land of his early youth. Yet he could not sympathize with the rude prejudices of the country he now visited after so long an interval, even though his father was most deeply imbued with them. He considered the social state of the people as little removed from barbarism, and he looked on their savage and ignoble feuds as a perfect solecism, in an age when chivalry flourished elsewhere, in all the seducing brilliancy of fierce, yet elegant warfare. He was revolted by the recollections which rushed upon him, as he approached his home, of that passive submission to the will of his parents relative to affairs which, according to his creed, ought to be of the heart; and he felt that nothing could ever induce him to submit to the right of disposal over his very person, which the worthy fathers of Zealand claimed from their children of either

sex, as undisturbedly as they enjoyed their hereditary fiefs. In short, Vrank Van Borselen was, in the halls of his ancient race, as much superior to the rude but honest beings around him, as he was in the courts of Burgundy, France, or Rome, to the libertine and unprincipled swarms which the strong heats of civilization are too sure to engender. He was a young man in advance of the times he lived in; in whom reason took the mastery of passion, while good taste at once subdued and strengthened the force of warm feeling. Even in those days of enterprise, and amidst men of the boldest daring, he held a high place, and was generally considered destined to do great things, not so much from his fine talents, evident as they were, as from a rare display of solid judgment capable of directing them in the right road. Philip of Burgundy, his lord by adoption, but to whom he was bound by no allegiance, beyond reciprocal services, held him in high esteem; and had recently employed him in two missions,

(on one, as a subordinate auxiliary, on the other, as an independent agent,) either of which many an older follower would have felt honoured by, and might have managed less ably. To render a succinct account of these missions, the latter of which had finished with his delivery of a sealed missive to his father, was the duty which Vrank proceeded to perform, as soon as the first burst of welcome had subsided into a less turbulent delight, and ere the evening repast was served up in the eating-hall to which they soon adjourned. Vrank took but little heed of the repast itself, beyond the mere indulgence of an excellent appetite. He saw that it was served without those strict forms of etiquette, to which he had been for some years accustomed, and also that the various dishes of which it was composed, seemed but so many modified preparations of the two grand staples of Zealand cookery, fish and wild fowl. But he had for the last few weeks been daily recalled to the recollection of old tastes and customs,

by displays nearly similar and always analogous to that which was now spread before him.

"My precious boy," said the mother, following with anxious eyes every morsel that he lifted to his mouth, in the large pewter spoon, or on the sharp point of his clumsy knife, "it does me good to see thee eat. Look, my noble master and gracious husband, how our dear son relishes that mixture of chopped salmon and skelfish, and no wonder, for the juniper sauce might give vigour to the palled palate of a Middleburgh burgher. Change your young master's platter with a helping of yon wild duck, coddled in kelp," continued she, to the serving-wench who aided the cook and kitchen varlets, in their duty of not only dressing the meal but in serving it, as its various parts succeeded on the board.

Floris Van Borselen, to allow his son free scope for eating, had turned his eyes again on the despatch which Vrank had before read to him, his own ignorance of the French language

making that an insurmountable task to himself; and deaf to his dame's observations, he pondered over the words which he could not decipher, and examined the ducal seal of Burgundy, with a proud satisfaction at this proof of his being in actual and direct correspondence with one of the most potent sovereigns of Europe.

"Now, my dear child," resumed Vrowe Bona, "put aside thy platter. I see the duck is too fishy for thy taste, and in truth till the frost sets in these birds have a sea-weed flavour; but this larded curlieu stuffed with Picardy chestnuts, will please thee better—it has been four days steeped in vinegar, and is as tender as a Breda capon."

"In very truth, my good mother," said Vrank, with a smile, "I can eat no more—all the dishes are excellent, but I must now give over—you see my father has ended his repast, and I must continue the account of my travels."

"Eat no more! Why child, what is come over thee? Thou canst not have lost thy native

taste, nor expect French juncates or condiments on our truly national board! Neither thy father nor myself, Vrank, ever allow such pernicious adjuncts to our homely fare."

"You do me wrong, dear mother, if you suspect me not to relish the good cheer you give me—but where have been your eyes? There must be bounds to mortal ability; I have made a most hearty meal."

"Alas! Vrank, is this thy notion of a hearty meal? Ah! much I fear me indeed that foreign customs have over-refined thy wholesome appetite. Why, the old curate of Ovenesse, who crossed from the main-land yesterday, and made his morning meal with us, ate to his own share a young turbot, two pickled plovers and mashed parsnips, with the full half of a broiled bittern, a wing of which would make more than thy whole supper, and a slice of the red-rinded cheese of Edam—and good Father Sibrant is no great feeder neither."

Vrank had nothing more to reply; but his

father now took up his cause, and gave a new turn to the conversation.

"In verity and fair argument, my good wife," said he, "it doth seem to me that Vrank has done due honour to the viands, and enough to prove himself a true and hearty Zealander. Press the boy no more—let him quaff another horn of hydromel, and reserve his remaining powers for the crowning dish of our feast, the emblem of our cause, the type of our hopes. Ay! for as sure as that royal Kabblejaw smokes on its platter, so sure shall we triumph over those rebellious Hoeks, whom to-morrow shall see put down for ever. Honour to thee, my Lord Kabblejaw, and great praise and prosperity to thy cause!"

This last apostrophe, in a voice most seriously ludicrous, was addressed to a huge cod-fish, which the head cook carried up in procession and placed on the table, while the attendant varlets and wenches solemnly followed, some with sauces, and others merely doing mute

honour to the occasion. The fish had a wreath of flowers stuck with skewers upon his head, and his tail was crisped and twisted up by a string, fastened to the side fins, adding an air of pert stupidity to the straining eyes and wide spread mouth of the dead idol, to which many a living one might form a parallel.

Vrank could not resist a smile, though mixed with pain, at the gravity with which his really high-minded sire thus paid tribute to the degrading tyranny of party spirit. Luckily for him his father did not observe the doubtful expression of his face; and he did not dare to refuse partaking of the venerated dish, nor fail to clear off a goblet in its honour, which ceremonies he well remembered were the tests of those political principles, of which Floris Van Borselen was now the leading champion.

"Let the board be cleared, and the second table furnished," said the chieftain, in his usual tone of command; and his recovered air of rude dignity seemed now no longer to be broken

by any intrusive weakness. He had partaken of the mystic emblem of his political faith; and his whole mind was suddenly turned into the broad but troubled channel of public affairs. His orders were immediately obeyed, by the removal of the several dishes, and the supply of others of more solid substance, to the long stone table which stood at the farther end of the hall; the upper, or place of honour, being by feudal usage elevated by several steps, and on occasions divided from the lower by a folding screen. At present, this inferior compartment was filled by even more than the ordinary occupants of its table, many of the household being allowed by peculiar courtesy the great honour of feasting almost in the company, but certainly in the sight, of their lord. He and the members of his family, who had all, down to the youngest boy, been admitted to his table on this happy occasion, now soon retired. As they moved away, the respectful ardour of their servitors could no longer be restrained, but it burst forth

in a loud shout, whose three-fold repetition made the bare walls ring, and shook many a cobweb on the smoke-dried beams which supported the unceiled roof of the hall. Among the loud voices which pitched their highest notes in this chorus, that of Oost the Dyke-digger sounded pre-eminent, and many of his fellow choristers were forced to cease their cries and stop their ears, which seemed literally split by his hoarse yet piercing tones. It will be judged that due deference was paid to this infrequent but by no means unknown visitor at Eversdyke Castle, when it is told that he was foster-father to young Vrank, who had been born and nursed in the hardy climate of Friesland, his mother's country. Oost had been more than once employed as the agent of communications between his lord's possessions in that country and in Zealand, and had now accompanied Vrank, as guide on the wild route where we first introduced them to our readers, and which it was intended he should soon retrace on a commis-

sion still more important. Leaving the wassailers to their coarse enjoyments, and taking leave for the night of the two blooming girls and three boys who formed the junior members of the Borselen family, the father and mother, attended by Vrank, were soon again seated in the private saloon, or withdrawing-room.

"So, my son, you have indeed commenced a brilliant career!" said Floris Van Borselen, exultingly, as he resumed his chair, Vrank standing respectfully beside him, and the mother discreetly retiring, though not quite out of earshot of a conversation too important for her to bear direct part in.

"This truly is honor in a double degree! Be proud of it, my boy, and know your place—and now answer me on one or two points still. When the good duke's ambassadors, to whom you acted as secretary, laboured so well with your aid to decide his Holiness to annul the mock contract with Glocester, did no one on his part back Jacqueline's prayer that it should be confirmed?"

"My noble father, make me not vain or imperious of the distinction done to me by my princely patron. St. Andrew be my witness, I bear no arrogant notion of my own merit, but hold myself in all humility, as honoured far beyond my deserts. On the part of the Duke of Glocester—"

"Vrank, this will never do you good! The man who knows not his own merit can never make it felt by others. The higher you hold your head, the more will the vulgar crouch beneath your feet. Stoop to their level, and they will try to trample on you straight."

"I covet no triumph over the mean herd of men, my father; and perhaps did I toss my head too high in life, I might miss my footing in its slippery paths, and stumble from my very attempts to soar."

"Well, well, go on just now in your own track. We'll discuss this point anon. Continue your speech. The Duke of Glocester—"

"Was represented by a single emissary at

the papal court, a dark, mysterious man, who held no pomp nor apparel, but came, and staid, and went, in gloomy singleness. Yet it was said he had mighty influence over his holiness, and he at all times commanded his private ear. Nevertheless, my gracious lords, our noble duke's ambassadors received from the pontiff's own hands—I can aver it well, for I read, attested, and copied the document—a letter to the duke, assuring him that ere long a bull should issue, annulling Madam Jacqueline's contract with Glocester, and prohibiting her marriage with him, even should her lawful husband, John of Brabant, die before her."

"As he most surely must—for a life of debauchery, and a feeble frame like his, cannot last much longer. But who was this secret emissary that vainly strove to thwart thine and the lords ambassadors' good labours? Some noble, or some proud knight, chosen by haughty Glocester for this mission?"

"Not so, my father. He was a simple priest,

untitled and unbeneficed even. Strange rumours were afloat as to his character and conduct. Report even said that the fierce lustre of his eye was lighted at unholy fires—that his cheeks caught their livid tinge from the poisonous vapours of forbidden works, from furnace and crucible—"

"The Virgin and St. Philagon be my speed, Vrank, but thou makest my blood curdle and my flesh creep! Hark ye this, good wife? And have I not right to dread the contact of foreign fellowship for this our boy? Heretics and sorcerers admitted even to the pontiff's privacy! Preserve us, Heaven, from the like! Let our cold clime keep the plague of southern corruption from us!"

Vrowe Bona was content to remain silent, satisfied in her own mind that neither demon nor devil could have power over the virtue of her beloved son Vrank, but not caring to contest the point with her husband. Vrank, however, felt disposed to lessen his father's horror at his com-

munication, and remarked that the close confidence to which this English priest was admitted by the Pope was argument against the reports to his disfavour.

"And even supposing them true," continued he, "it was still plainly proved that he had gained no power by magic or black arts over the pontiff's mind. For as he passed from the secret closet on the last morning of the mission, I marked him, while I and my lords the ambassadors waited in the ante-room, smile such a smile as a fiend might have worn. We all thought our labour lost, and that Jacqueline's cause had triumphed. But, to our great marvel, the next minute admitted us into the sacred presence, and the important letter was delivered by his holiness himself into the ambassador's hands."

"Well, my boy," replied Floris, "that only proves what scripture says, as I am well assured by the Curate of Overnesse, that the pope is stronger than the devil; and moreover

that he outwitted the English conjurer, if such he was. And what became of him after?"

"That I know not. We all of the embassy instantly departed, to convey the sacred missive to the duke at Hesdin, along with a duplicate for the Duke of Brabant at Brussels. And you may judge the joy with which the good Philip learned this issue to our important mission; for the Pope's decision relieves him from all fear of Jacqueline's being able to maintain her cause, and will force her to break her lawless intercourse with Glocester."

"And proud I am, as the duke is happy, my dear Vrank, that you have contributed so greatly to ruin the cause of that adulteress—to carry the point that will drive her to submission and penance. The poisoner of her uncle! The bane of our country! Prosperity or peace can never smile on us till this new Jezebel is cast to the dogs."

"Pardon me, my father, if I am bold in saying you take up this matter too warmly. I did my duty in labouring to do my good lord's

bidding, but I have no virulent hatred to the Countess Jacqueline, for in the first place she is a woman—"

"I am not so sure of that, Vrank. She may be a fiend, an incarnate devil in woman's shape."

"My dear father!"

"Is she not an adulteress?"

"That at least proves her to be a woman."

"Why, perhaps it does."

"Then she is unfortunate, father."

"What better luck could befal her? Did she not poison her uncle, the count and bishop?"

"I never knew that it was proved."

"Was not Van Vloet hanged for it? and was he not a Hoek? And is she not joined in a common interest with that hated faction? Is not that proof of all and more than is laid to her charge? Does it not make your blood boil as it does mine, Vrank, the very mention of the foes of our race? Are you not in heart and soul, for life and death, a Kabblejaw?"

"Father," said Vrank Borselen, in a tone of

dignity that calmed for a time even the fierce heat of party spirit, "I am in heart and head, by feeling as well as duty, your son. Your cause is mine, and my life belongs to my country I will uphold to my death the quarrel of my gracious lord of Burgundy against this usurping countess, because I believe it just; as I laboured against her intended marriage, because I thought it sinful. But I was not in the spirit of persecution. Her sex and her misfortunes claim my pity; and as to those who have espoused her cause, I shall combat them as enemies, but I cannot hate them as men."

"Not hate the Hoeks! Have pity for Jacqueline!" exclaimed the father, all his powers of endurance overcome by this climax of his son's degeneracy, "Saint Philagon, give me patience! Is this a child of mine? Is this Vrank Borselen? O shame, shame! Wife, Bona, Vrowe, come hither! Come forward and look on this boy, and vouch to me that he is mine. By

the blood of the Borselens I doubt it now! Not hate the Hoeks? Monstrous, monstrous! Hark ye, young Sir, you *must* hate them, you *shall*, or by St. Peter and St. Paul I cast you off for ever!"

"Oh, Vrank, Vrank, if your father swears, it must be so. Do, my dear boy, for the love of the Virgin, and of St. Andrew, your patron's patron, whose badge you wear, hate them cordially every one, man, woman, and child; hate them like a good Kabblejaw and a pious Christian!"

"Christian or Turk, he *shall* hate them, abhor them, loathe them as I do, as my father, and my father's father did! Have we not for three generations followed them with fire and sword? Have we ever served them in peace, or spared them in war? Have we not done them every wrong in the power of men to do? And shall we not hate them? Vrank Borselen, hearken to me, and bethink thee that your grandsire, and his sire, are listening to my words.

Be reasonable, do not embitter this happy day by an obstinate prejudice; remember the wisdom of your ancestors, and hate the Hoeks!"

"And, dear Vrank, have no pity upon that wanton, who fled from her poor young husband, who was but a child in her hands, to the arms of a foreign paramour," added Vrowe Bona, with a supplicating tone.

During these harangues the young man felt himself blush deeply for his prejudiced and ignorant parents. But he loved them not the less, and he was really sorry that an intemperate avowal of his tolerant feelings had caused them such evident pain, or disturbed the harmony of their previous sensations; he therefore resolved to temporize with what he could not hope to conquer, and said—

"My most honoured father, and you, good mother, be not offended at my speech, nor doubt my zeal because I did not well weigh the words that vouched for it. Be not too hasty with your son; recollect I am but as a stranger

in the land, and have forgotten much of its perhaps wholesome feelings. Give me but a little time—let me but know the recent causes of enmity, and revive the recollection of old hatred to the foes of our house, and I warrant ye I shall not disgrace my name."

"Bravely spoken, Vrank!" said the father, grasping his son's hand, "I knew thy blood would rise, and I condemned thee hastily. Thou dost promise, then, to hate"—

"I will do my best, father, to obey you in all things."

"Oh! that is enough, my gracious husband; do not agitate him too much to-night, his precious brain requires rest!" exclaimed the mother.

"Ay; and to-morrow, as we go along to Tergoes, he shall hear enough to rouse his fury to the fitting pitch, in which every true Kabblejaw should meet his deadly enemy."

"But are we not now in truce with the Hoeks? Is not to-morrow's meeting one for

the friendly exercise of the Arbalette, and fair and peaceable discussion?" asked the son.

"Beshrew me, Vrank, if thou be not still a child! St. Peter and St. Paul forbid that we should any of us meet a Hoek in friendship. It is a time of truce, no doubt; but such a truce as the lion and the tiger grant each other while they take breath to renew the tug for life or death. To-morrow shall tell thee, boy, how the gentlemen of South Beveland bide together in peace; and, perhaps, the next day may let you into the secret of their ways of warfare. Ho, there!" and, as the chieftain struck his hand on the plain oak-table, an attendant entered.

"Tell Fritz Stoop Van Stitchel, the vesture-maker, to prepare instantly a Kabblejaw cap on the pattern of mine, and the fit of Mynheer Vrank's brown bonnet yonder, to be ready to-night for wear at dawn to-morrow."

"May it please your nobleness, old Fritz is already drunk, with the mixture of beer and

French stimulants served out to the household by your worship's orders."

"Let him get sober then directly, for by St. Paul, the cap must be made to-night," exclaimed Van Borselen.

"Nay, father," said Vrank, "it may not be possible for the poor tailor to become sober at your command, though it was easy to get drunk by your permission."

"Not possible! What shall dare to be impossible, when I command it to be done in my own castle? By our lady, Vrank, you forget yourself in more ways than one! Let Stoop Van Stitchel make the cap, drunk or sober, or the point of his needle shall be blunt in comparison with my wrath. Away!"

When the attendant withdrew, Vrank remonstrated against the necessity of his appearing at the meeting next morning with any badge except that of Burgundy, in whose service he was; and, moreover, specially employed in it even then; but the father had nearly relapsed

into his intemperate mood at this apparent demur, and insisted so angrily that his son should be equipped in the distinctive cognizance of his hereditary sect, that he submitted with the best grace he could to what he considered a *dis*grace of no common order.

This point agreed to, he resumed the account of his journey into Friesland, whither he had been sent by Philip, immediately after he returned from Rome, to prepare such of the nobles there as were averse to the cause of Jacqueline, for the duke's intended invasion of her states.* Vrank next recounted his homeward expedition through the Zevenvolden, under the guardianship of Oost; their exploit against the Orox; their subsequent passage through the plains of Drent and Overyssel; the picturesque

* Friesland, at this epoch, had its factions as well as Holland and Zealand. The *Schieringers* had taken part with John the Pitiless, and the *Vetkoopers* with Jacqueline.

route of guilders; their voyage down the Meuse, and final visit to James Borselen, the brother of Floris, on the mainland of East Flanders, from whose castle, near Biervliet, they had just come over with the news that the levies under John Uterken were on the point of embarking for Zealand, the precursors of Philip's own intended armament.

But in all these communications Vrank said not one word of his encounter with the strange hunting-party, nor his gage of combat with an unknown knight—and he half trembled, from old associations of boyish dread, at the possibility of betraying to his father, by word or look, a hint of his adventure with the beautiful huntress, whose gift he had from the moment he received it worn round his neck, and close over his heart.

After many careful assiduities on the part of the good vrowe who herself prepared his night mixtus or posset-drink of mulled Gascoigny, he

took a dutiful farewell of both parents, received their double blessing, and retired to the chamber of honour, which had been hastily prepared for his accommodation.

## CHAPTER VII.

The next morning the loud screaming of horns, and the roll of an ill-braced drum awoke Vrank from a sound sleep, and told him that preparations were making for departure for the meeting at Tergoes. He was soon equipped, in a suit more consistent with his rank in life than the one he wore on his journey through the Zevenvolden; for he had sent forward a supply of clothes from the duke's palace in Picardy, which had safely travelled through Flanders, with a caravan of merchandize consigned

to his uncle's care at Biervliet, and Vrank, with his usual accuracy, had managed to a day the time of his own and his wardrobe's simultaneous arrival. Nor must this be wondered at; for not only was the post at that period established in those parts of Europe, but the passage to and fro of carriers and baggage-waggons throughout the rich and commercial states of Flanders, was performed with a despatch and regularity scarcely exceeded at the present day. Vrank now abandoned the costume of Friesland, the adoption of which had been necessary during his mission to that country, and he donned a far more elegant dress, but one probably little more becoming to a face and figure so independent of ornament, and which had shewn off to such advantage the garments he now threw aside. On the present occasion he wore the gallant equipment suited to a nobleman of Burgundy, France, or Brabant, for at this period the distinctive marks of provincial costume were all merged in one style common to those countries.

Vrank did not, however, display such a suit of splendid materials as he would have worn in the palaces of Dijon, Paris, Brussels, or Hesdin. He had no wish to shock his father's plainer taste, nor to excite the envy of those with whom he was about to associate. His only anxiety was to wear what was at once becoming to his own person, and consistent with the princely service in which he was engaged. His mantle of dark-blue cloth was modestly lined with grey taffeta, and purfled with *gris*, a costly but not shewy trimming; his surcoat was bound with a plain silver-wrought edging; his hose was not party-coloured, but of unpresuming white. In short, he bore none of those gaudy or garish links to which, however, on fit occasion he had not been averse. The broad red badge of Burgundy shewed plain on his doublet, which his open surcoat now no longer concealed, and his gilt spurs on his brown-tanned boots bore evidence that he had gained the proudest distinction of chivalry. He soon girt his sword by

his side, with a broad waist-belt of highly polished black leather, studded with silver points, to match the edging of his surcoat and the buttons of his doublet. And then, to put the finish to his equipment, and in his opinion to ruin the effect of the whole—he clapped on his head the important grey cap—clumsy, ill-fashioned, and worse fitting, with many a wry stitch, in the placing of which the drunken tailor had consumed several hours, and as many ounces of what learned clerks call "midnight oil." Below this obnoxious head-gear a profuse clustering of carefully combed and perfumed curls hung down, as was their wont, on the wearer's shoulders. But still as he looked on himself in the little polished steel reflector, stuck with its rude oak frame-work in the wall, he was utterly dissatisfied with his appearance, and quite disgusted with the intolerable cap, a just emblem, he thought, of the low, coarse, and senseless cause it typified. Had he lived between three and four centuries later, he might

have seen the most civilized people in Europe, in imitation of ancient Rome, adopt a similar emblem—for a cause too holy to be degraded by any badge, or ruined, however it was retarded, by its frantic disciples.

" Ah !" thought Vrank Borselen, " if I might dare to wear round the rim of this vile bonnet the bright blue girdle that now encircles my neck, and let the brilliant aigrette that is on my bosom dangle on one side of my head, what a different air should I have to-day ! how much more honourable would I hold my Kabblejaw cap than the most proud-plumed helm in Christendom !—But hold ! am I not letting gallantry outrun calm sense and rational reflection ? Is it meet that I rush headlong, like the impetuous herd of men, into a tangled forest of sentiment and passion, in which I may be wildered, and it may be, lost ? Is this becoming a prudent knight, one honoured with a sovereign's confidence, and jealous of his own esteem ? —Well reasoned, admirably argued, steady

Vrank Borselen, as I am dubbed here at home, or Sir Francon the Wise, as they call me elsewhere! But what has reason or argument to do in this case? Can they stop the throbbing of my heart against this girdle, that holds me as in a spell? And what is this influence that has so fixed itself in my mind? A woman, but once seen, and even then unknown! Springs this deep sentiment from any fathomable source? Is it her beauty? I have seen as beautiful. Her air of dignity, her tone of melancholy pride? Have I not known the noblest dames and damsels of Europe, and mixed with all varieties of the happy and the wretched? No—it is that I did her service and that she was grateful, that I admired her and that she rejected not my homage. There is the spell that raises the spirit of love—Ha! hold again, Sir Francon; Love! aha, beware thee of that elfin sprite, which hitherto thou hast held at nought! take heed of passion's pit-falls! Am I not caught already?"

While the youth thus soliloquised, he had inadvertently placed himself on a great iron-clasped chest, one of those double-purposed articles of furniture, which held the wardrobe and afforded seats for the tenants of the sleeping rooms of a Zealand castle, and those of other countries, to much later days. Totally forgetful of all external matters, and absorbed in reflection, he was deaf to the sounds of horn and drum, and the clamour and clatter which they had awakened. He had mechanically opened his doublet, and drawn forth the sparkling ends of the precious gift from the unknown lady of his incipient passion; and as he gazed on it he continued his monologue.

"Of what rare virtue is the simplest token from one we —— are inclined to love! How it recalls each movement, look, and word; and keeps alive the pure flame of sentiment which she has lighted! But how far more should I prize one phrase traced by the fair hand that placed this gift in mine—one document of

thought, one record of the mind! No, not all the ringlets tha ever were shrined in brooch or woven in bracelet are worth one written word from those we —— love—ay, out with it, though there be magic in the sound! And who may this enchantress be? who the mixed company that tended her so closely! that fat old flatterer?—her father, no doubt. And the proud foreigners, for such they were? The haughty bully who so questioned me?—perhaps her husband! Yes, yes, too surely such, for his whole tone was that of legalized command. And my challenger? And that sturdy brigand-looking warrior with his red cap? A Hollander he must be, and a Hoek—of course an enemy! Oh! let me soon escape from these rude regions, where men are savages still—where I must meet perhaps to-day in bloody hatred, him by whose side I whilom braved a common danger, and whose hand I never grasped but once, and that in friendship. But *she*—whose waist has been bound by this

silken band—is this arm ever to clasp it more? —when may I meet her, and know for whose sake I wear this pledge? I tremble to seek her, for an enemy she must be.—An enemy! how foul a word for one so fair! Yes, the whole party must have been licensed in their sport by the Count Bishop of Drent and Utrecht. When they spoke together, I caught a mention of his name, and they seemed to stand upon his rights when they first challenged Oost and me. And as we coasted the Zuyder Zee, on our way southward, their boats stood for the main, right between Urk and Schokland. Some rich merchant, haply, from Amsterdam, with his daughters, an island chieftain, and two English visitors, to whom he gave a cast in the prelate's chace of the Zevenvolden. But could that face of dignity have sprung from servile trade? —That pensive grace be caught from vulgar commerce? Heaven and St. Andrew guide me —I know not what to think, nor if I had not better forget it all—"

"Why, Vrank, boy!" exclaimed Floris Van Borselen, giving a rude slap of his broad palm to his son's shoulder, which made him bound up as though his body were moved by a spring. "Why, what art thou doing? Dangling that gew-gaw like a fool of the town *Gilden* playing with his bauble and bells! Five good minutes have I stood here watching at thy elbow, and thou heedest me no more than yonder signal-mast that stands out on the rampart."

"Your pardon, father—my mind was—"

"At the end of that tassel, was it not? Ah, Vrank! Vrank! this will never do! at least in Zealand, however it may suit the lazy ways of Burgundy and France. And, God's grace, what finery you have donned;—how your hair stinks of rose-water and ambergris!—And, eh? what trimmings, what silks! why it would puzzle a star-gazer from the topmost spire of Rotterdam to count the buttons of your doublet!"

Vrank was relieved, by this coarse bantering and the grim smile that struggled through his

father's beard, from the first alarm that his thoughts had been divined or that he had given unconscious utterance to them. He saw that old Floris was not after all displeased at the bravery he exclaimed against; and his modesty half guessed the fact that his father saw himself, as it were, not unflatteringly reflected in the person of the son.

"My dear father," said he, returning the smile, and carefully thrusting the aigrette and ribbon-ends into his doublet, "I could not dress more plainly, in honour to his highness of Burgundy; and I hope, in spite of your sarcasms, you do not think me a popinjay?"

"Why, that badge *does* look well upon thy breast, and I love to see that rapier by thy side, and those brave spurs upon thy heels—but most of all, it cheers my heart to look at thy cap, Vrank! Now, indeed, doth thy features wear the semblance of thy grandsire's!"

"I hope, Sir, to emulate his virtues."

"There is no fear for thee, my boy, if thou

as cordially as he did, abhor the Hoeks. And so, at length I see thee in thy full honours—Sir Francon de Borsele, as the French chronicler calls thee, in this year's Titles of Chivalry, which hangs up in gilt and painted parchment under the Borselen banner in the Armoury. And thy spurs were gained at that terrible battle of Crevant! Many a noble head was laid low that day, Vrank?"

"Yes, father, French, Scotch, and Lombards, fell thick before our lances."

"Poor fellows! all strangers to those who killed them! Ah, Vrank, war is a sad thing when it forces us to fight against men whose very names we know not—to gash with rapier or battle-axe faces quite new to us! But it is glorious work to slaughter our own countrymen—real enemies—miscreants, whose features are as familiar to us as our sword-blade. Ah, how we thrust home when we pierce the heart that hates us and that we hate!"

This eulogy on civil war, and the reasoning

which supported it, so contrary to the generous notions of chivalry, made Vrank Borselen shudder. His father did not suspect that emotion, for he could not comprehend its source.

"My honoured sire," said the youth, "you must believe how truly I wish to square my opinion and my conduct by your's. But such sentiments as these are, I confess it, somewhat foreign to those I have been brought up with. Our princely Duke Philip, the great Bedford, and all the other models of our chivalry, hold civil war to be a barbarous evil, and ever hold back the armed hand instead of urging it on against the breasts of fellow countrymen, who, though differing from us in some shade of thought, or on some point of local interest, have the same land to love, speak the same tongue, and most commonly descend from the same stock in which our own blood has its source."

"Vrank," cried the impatient chieftain, "I have listened to thee till my blood tingles at my fingers' ends and throbs in my temples—I can

bear no more! Thou art almost a ruined man—but I must snatch thee from thy perilous career of false opinion, and bring thee once more back to our right ways of thinking. Now is unfitting time to shew thee thy folly—we must to horse—but bear this in mind, as the words of thy sire speaking the maxims of a glorious race of ancestors: There is but one line of conduct right—at least for this country, and I know or care for no other—and that is to stick firm to the Kabblejaw cause, and pursue with unflinching hatred the vile Hoeks—to shew neither pity nor mercy to them, sex, age, or condition; and if by possible chance, in a moment of frenzy, or instigated by the devil, thine own father should join their ranks, to plunge thy rapier up to the very hilt in his heart, to spurn him to the earth, and trample him under thy feet—"

"What, Sir! my own father—thee! my noble, my honoured, my beloved parent!" exclaimed Vrank, hoping to recall the rage-impelled chieftain to reason.

"Ay, boy, me, me! Floris Van Borselen, who is—at least I honestly believe it—thy own sire. In such a case it is thy bounden duty to kill thy father, as in like case, so Heaven be my speed, I could have done by mine!"

"But—"

"Not a word more, Vrank—not a word! on thy duty I command thee to be silent! Ah, my boy, much, much I fear me thy principles are loosened almost too much for remedy—but it shall not be my fault—I will do my duty;—so, come away now, my boy," added he, with recovered serenity, but still with a tone of solemn anxiety springing from sorrow at his son's degeneracy, "our horses wait, and we shall be barely in time for the meeting. But hark awhile! What is that effeminate trinket that you have put up so carefully, but which you gazed on just now, like your lady-mother counting the beads of her rosary?"

"Oh, nothing, Sir—a trifle, a token, a mere trinket, as you call it."

"'Tis woman's gear, Vrank—I know it; and your confusion confesses it."

"Father, there is nought to be confused at, and little to confess. It is a keepsake from a friend."

"'Tis well, boy, you made that pause, for had you said a mistress, by St. Peter and St. Paul! I had—"

"Nay, father, don't give yourself the trouble to swear—I did not say a mistress, nor could I with truth, for I have none."

"Vrank—thou art my child, every inch! I never had a mistress but the good vrowe thy mother. I never ran joust nor tilt, nor carried the favour of woman on helm or shield. But in my youth, and in our native land here, men exchanged pledges of regard more worth than those. My good friend Oliver Peterkins, of Zuric Zee, once gave me a steel gorget, and I gave him in turn my ten-inch, two-edged dagger; and Simon Van Swigel, when I saved him at the fight of Zwoll, threw his iron chain-belt

round my neck as a pledge of brotherhood. But your southern gallants and galliards are not cast in such a mould, and silken band and filigree-work are now, mayhap, the fashion!"

"Not among men, my father. But if a female be your friend—"

"St. Philagen forefend! Oh, Vrank, if friendship takes that guise, 'tis like the devil in the skin of a snake!"

"Yet methinks that friendship, to be truly worthy of the name, requires the softness of the one sex blended with the warmth of the other."

"And a right slothful cloak 'twould make to wrap up manliness in. No, Vrank, no! Women were meant for other uses than to make friends of them. But I have only now time to tell you to beware of them. And much it needs you to steel yourself, when you return to the allurements of the court. They creep into a young man's bosom, Vrank, as cunningly as a Lombard's poniard into the crevices of his ene-

my's armour. There is poison and treachery in all they say or do; in their nods and leers, their courtesies and caperings, their counter-smiles and dumb shew! Beware of them, my boy! their bracelets and girdles, their spangles, their embroidery, tiffanies, tinsels, ruffs and rib-bands—their crisped hair and painted faces!—When they weep with one eye they can wink with another—ah, the crocodiles! they should be whipped and pilloried, or their daubed cheeks be stigmatized with the searing-iron! Much, much it grieves me to know that even in our good duke, you have a bad example on the score of these false syrens. There is scarce a bush from Dinant to Dijon out of which you might not beat a bastard of Burgundy's; and they say sad things, Vrank, of his doings with that English countess. Ah, my boy, take heed of them, but most of all beware the married ones! You blush, my poor boy—'tis a sign of grace and virtue, Vrank, I like it at thy age. But enough of this—now let's away—we are too late already!"

When Vrank and his father had affectionately embraced the vrowe, and the young branches of the family tree, and partaken of a hasty breakfast, they turned fairly out into the court-yard, mounted the horses which stood prepared, crossed the bridge already mentioned, and set forward on their way, in due form of state.

Four trumpeters on horseback opened the march. Next came six gentlemen whose lands depended on the fief of Eversdyke, fully armed, lances in rest, and each followed by their squires, a bowman and two varlets. To this advanced-guard succeeded the squire who bore the furred mantle of honour of the chief. Another carried the war-sword, five feet long, with a twisted blade, such as is represented in pictures as wielded by the archangel that guarded Paradise. Finally came the third squire, holding the plumed and jewelled hat of his noble master. After these three squires advanced Heer Borselen (an appellation belonging to the higher class of Zealand and Dutch

nobility) on his best horse. Vrank followed close, but at some paces respectful distance, and almost mixed with the officers of the household, dressed in their blue mantles, and all well mounted. A bold but motley-looking band of followers on foot, irregularly armed, and clothed in defiance of all uniform, closed the procession. Each man carried a cross-bow, or arbalette, or long-bow, or sword, or dagger, or axe; and Oost, the dyke-digger, was no undistinguished object in the crowd, bearing his huge turquoise, still marked with the monster's blood. Rude music, bad instruments, and worse players, sounded the notes of advance; and the whole party had soon passed the moat and taken to the unpaved route, which was tracked by the deep marks of waggon-wheels, and afforded bad travelling in the humid soil.

In most other parts of Europe it was broad day-light when Vrank and his father set out for Tergoes; but in the heavy atmosphere of Zealand the sun had not yet appeared; a thick,

cold fog hung in the air, and shrouded the whole face of Nature. At times, a gust of wind coming from the westward served to shake this vapoury curtain, but not with force enough to sweep it from the earth to which it clung. The sound of the tide beating against the dyke which guarded the beach, many feet more elevated than the travellers' heads, was like the melancholy murmur of nature over the sad scene it had made. The breeze sighed in the long flaggers and rushes that grew in the stagnant ditches, at either side the way, by courtesy called a road, and the loud flapping of wings and harsh screaming of the water-fowl, rising at every step, proved that animal and elemental nature were in concert. Vrank could just dimly see his horse's head in the mist; he felt the cold fog in his very bones; he hugged his cloak close round him; he thought of the gay vintage of Burgundy, at that very time in full activity; of the blue skies of Italy; of the bright atmosphere of Artois; all bringing sad compa-

risons, and he could not resist one reflection of mingled regret and remorse.

"Can I love this land? Yet I might still have been a patriot had I never left home!"

He gazed on his father, who seemed absorbed in thought, with open mouth, inhaling the dank air, as naturally as an infant imbibes the mother's milk. Vrank could not help at once wondering at and admiring the striking figure on which he gazed. Floris Van Borselen was, like his son, well-grown and strong; the upper part of his face was marked and good; but the lower was enshrouded in a grisly beard. His dress consisted of a mixture of peace and war, marking, in the same spirit with his rival, Van Monfoort, on the hunting-party in the Zevenvolden, the suspicion with which every individual of either faction ventured abroad, even in truce or sport. Van Borselen wore next his body, a coat of light mail, formed of scales of iron, in imitation of fish skin, and descending

half way down his thighs, which with his legs were clad in close-fitting garments, also of leather, thickly overlaid with broad straps coming up to his knees, in the same fashion as those worn by Oost, the dyke-digger. His arms were shielded by shoulder-plates of well-wrought steel, and the gorget which covered his breast guarded that vital part; his head, instead of skellet, or bacinet, or mortier, or any other usual covering of proof, displayed, as our readers may guess, the beloved cap to which the Kabblejaws and Hoeks (with the sole difference of colour) entrusted the protection of skulls, on whose natural power of resistance they rationally but modestly seemed to calculate; for even in fight the several factions took pride in thus risking their sconces to the search of blade and battle-axe, which often no doubt cleft a skull as scantily furnished within as without. And trailing from behind Van Borselen's head, hung, on a level with his horse's tail, that preposterous sort of pennon of scarlet cloth called

a *lamberquin.* One hand carried a bow of prodigious strength, and at his side his rapier, (fully his own length as he sat in his saddle,) was tucked snugly to his belt by a hook, large enough to have hauled along the largest Kabblejaw, either fish or flesh, that he ever bowed down to or stood up for.

"Dost thou know my thoughts, my good Vrank?" said the chieftain, suddenly turning round towards his son.

"No, father," replied the almost startled youth.

"Then I'll tell thee. I was just thinking what would be the best and easiest method of picking a quarrel, and breaking all terms with these pernicious Hoeks at this truce-meeting by and by."

Vrank blushed crimson at this new outburst of the insensate spirit of faction.

"Brave boy!" exclaimed the father, "I see thy best blood is up at the very mention of t' miscreants!"

Vrank found that his father could not understand his blushes, any way, and he rejoiced in the conviction.

## CHAPTER VIII.

After a march of between two and three leagues, which appeared to Vrank double their real extent, the party arrived near its destination. The place of meeting announced its own vicinity long before the fog allowed it to become evident, by shouts and music of that varied and irregular kind, which indicated a mixed assembly, indulging in what is proverbially called with us "a Dutch concert." The trumpets of Meere Borselen blew a proud flourish in honour of his approach, and the sound was answered by an

ample burst of salutation. The mists were gradually growing thinner as the sun-beams pierced through and dissolved them; and the sight which soon opened on Vrank had much of the charm of those fairy decorations which the perfection of scenic art occasionally displays in our theatres. The gauze-like veil of vapour softened down the coarseness of many of the objects which shone through it, and threw over all an air of vague illusion which there are few subjects in nature that may not be improved by.

Several tents, in patches of distinct and regular encampment, first struck the view. These were composed of cloth of various manufactures and colours, intermixed with stripes of gaudy silk, the general effect of which was extremely brilliant. Each of these pavilions was surmounted either by a pennon, banner, or larger flag, all differing from each other. The banners indicated the noblest families of Zealand. The large flags belonged to the several corporations of the neighbouring towns, or to the

peasants, who had the right to participate in the annual exercise of the arbabette; and each of those standards shewed a flaring image of St. Sebastian, the great patron of archery, or some other rude emblem of the sport.

The different fraternities, or companies, had mostly all arrived, and stood in groups before their several encampments; the nobles, like Van Borselen, in suits nearly warlike, the gilden in uniforms of different coloured cloth, with various distinctions of trimming, scarf, or body belt. And many females were intermixed, of all ranks and classes; some smiling openly in natural beauty on the scene, others in black velvet masks (the common custom of the times) shrinking from exposure to the crowd. And still some straggling chieftains were seen from time to time approaching, their names shouted by their heralds or trumpeters; and a few of the *gilden*, who came from the neighbouring islands of North Beveland, Duveland, or Schowen, made their more tardy appearance, banners fly-

ing, music sounding, and each body preceded by its fool, whose jack-pudding tricks formed the most laughter-moving episodes of the day. In the wide space, round which the tents formed an irregular circle, four posts, about the ordinary height of a man, were erected at equal distances from the shooting stations; and on each of these posts was a wooden figure representing a bird, the genus of which it would have puzzled a naturalist to define. One of those effigies seemed of considerable honour, for it was completely clothed in feathers of as many sorts and colours as formed the borrowed plumage of the jay in the fable. Standing-places for the archers were erected at various distances from those objects which were presently to exercise their skill; and on a lofty mast in the very centre of the ground a white flag was hung out, in signal of the truce which was in full force—as long as the violence of the opposing factions chose to maintain it.

When Floris Van Borselen was recognised

at the limits of the encampment, a simultaneous rush was made towards him and his party by numbers of the people on foot, while several of the mounted gentlemen spurred on their steeds to pay their respects to their acknowledged chief. Vrank observed that every one of those had grey caps, such as his father and himself wore; and upon looking toward the encampments he was sorry to see that a considerable number of the assembly remained on their ground, and that all those who refused his father the courtesy of a greeting, wore the red head-gear that distinguished the opposite faction. In his opinion this argued ill for the probable tranquillity of the meeting; for if sullen reserve (and he thought he distinguished such) was to usher in the day, what was to be looked for when passions were excited, words ran high, and weapons were at hand? Vrank will not be suspected of timidity—at least he never was by those who knew him—but he could not help wishing himself away from the scene, which was

so likely to become full as turbulent and coarse as it was at present novel and picturesque. He vaguely remembered having been brought when quite a boy to some of those yearly meetings by his father. The face of one of the fools brought back a rush of recollections of those days. But having been placed early at the celebrated College of St. Omer, under the care of a maternal uncle who was governor of the town in the service of France, he was now for the first time, if not actually to witness the scene, at least to comprehend it.

Vrank was introduced by his father in due form to the whole shoal of Kabblejaws, in the midst of whom they were. His appearance excited some admiration, great respect, and infinite envy. But every other feeling was absorbed in delight at the recognised badge of Burgundy, and in the triumph it inspired in the duke's adherents over their already hated and now despised opponents. The tumult of congratulations that ran through the Kabblejaw

groups told the adverse party their secret, which Vrank's appearance confirmed; and, much sooner even than he expected, symptoms of quarrel burst forth, of which he was forced to admit himself to be the unintentional cause.

As Floris Van Borselen, having descended from his horse, proceeded with his son and their suite, towards the pavilion set apart for the judges of the sports, of whom the chieftain was the very first on the list, a number of the noble Hoeks, followed by many of their inferior partizans, advanced towards him, with anything but that air of conciliation in which people generally meet half way. One of them, a determined looking man in the prime of life, who was evidently the leader in the absence of Ludwick Van Monfoort, (excluded from the benefits of the truce by a sentence of banishment pronounced against him by John the Pitiless, and not yet legally removed,) strode forward to Floris, and exclaimed,

"Heer Borselen, what does this mean? I

protest in the name of every Hoek here present against the violation of the truce. What! are we to be braved and bullied by the badge of Burgundy? Do you dare to force into our privileged place of sport, a minion of false Philip, who durst not come himself?"

This sudden attack took the Kabblejaws quite by surprise. They had not, in their own elation, reckoned on the effect to be produced on their adversaries. Even Van Borselen had overlooked it; and as for Vrank, he thought that a truce was a sacred safeguard for all opinions and principles. But he was the first of the party with whom he was now identified, to recover from the surprise of the attack directed so personally against him. He stepped up close to the speaker, and was about to answer him in no measured phrase, when his father caught his arm, and cried out,

"Stand back, boy, and let me speak to this outrage. Heer Hemsted, your bold and ill-mannered speech merits another reply than

words; but I suppress my anger in consideration of my contempt."

"Contempt!" cried the fierce leader of the Hoeks; and the word was repeated by the mass of adherents who closed round him, in every variation of angry emphasis.

"Ay, by my saint, contempt!" said Van Borselen, "for I and the Kabblejaws present hold ourselves and our cause so sure, and yours so desperate, that I despise your railing and scorn your reproach"

"Enough said!" cried Zegher Van Hemsted, "friends, partizans, Hoeks, ye all hear this? Back to your stations, all! and to arms!"

"Quicker than I hoped, by Heavens, but not quicker than I wished!" exclaimed Van Borselen, "Kabblejaws, on your guard! out, weapons, and be ready!"

"Away, women! Strike the white flag! String your bows! To your ranks! Firm and fast!" and various other technical phrases common to the riots of the times, were vociferated

by both parties, with a rapidity and a noise quite stunning to Vrank, who saw in one moment the whole scene converted as if by magic into a field for mortal combat. As for him, he felt that he had nothing to do but to fight. His blood was as high up as that of any Kabblejaw or Hoek around him. There was no time for reflection. So he drew his sword like the rest, and kept close to his father, convinced that there was nothing like regularity to be looked for, nor any particular post for him to occupy in the onslaught for which all made ready. The women and boys fled in every direction. The fools gave up their merriment, and sought safety as best they could. Everything announced a fierce contest; when a man of remarkably acute and energetic mien, evidently of the priesthood, but dressed in the semi-secular frock at times allowed to churchmen, advanced into the central space, and without doffing his bonnet, which was neither red nor grey, but of neutral black, he spoke as follows:

"Nobles, burghers, peasants! I speak to ye all alike, for all have their equal rights to-day in this yearly meeting for the national sport. Are ye all mad? Has a sudden breeze swept over this plain, casting phrenzy on ye, as the destroying angel's sword scattered pestilence over Israel? You, Floris Van Borselen, and Zegher Van Hemsted, you! what frantic spirit drives ye to this excess, which so many ready-made maniacs seem anxious to imitate? High-blooded nobles of Zealand! Steady burghers! Hard-working peasants! do none of ye hold your best privilege as aught? Shall it be recorded that the exercise of the arbalette was for one whole year given up? for if it do not take place to-day, your charter of privilege allows it not to-morrow? And how many a tenure and frank pledge hang upon its regular observance? How many a contract is formed from Jay-shooting to Jay-shooting? And what confusion will result through the whole island if you persist in this violation of your own laws? Pestilent dog,

desist!" continued the speaker, to a man who had nearly climbed the mast, for the purpose of taking down the white flag; "lay not your daring hands on that emblem of peace! While that floats, all who hear me have time to think, and I may bring all to the level of common sense. Will any one give me a reason for this folly, this madness?"

The authoritative voice and manner of the orator produced a considerable effect on those in his hearing; and the whole throng became silent in successive degrees beyond him, as a pool recovers its calmness, from the centre of the circles into which a stone had ruffled its surface.

"You use harsh words, canon, but I will answer them," said Van Borselen. "It is the insolence of the Hoeks that forces us to arms."

"It is the outrage of the Kabblejaws that causes this," cried Zegher Van Hemsted; and many at either side echoed their leader's words, in a confusion that mingled them all together.

"Hoeks and Kabblejaws! Kabblejaws and Hoeks! Listen to me!" cried the ecclesiastic, in a voice of thunder.—"What would you have?"

"Blood! Revenge!" and many such pithy words were the replies to this question.

"Ye shall have it—plenty—more than you wish for—your foes' destruction and your own!" continued the priest, with a tone and attitude that might have suited a prophet. His words caused an immediate calm among the crowd. "Ay, ye shall be glutted with blood and vengeance, I promise ye—but would not ye like a little pastime, too? Be wise, men of Zealand! If you cut each other's throats before ye contest the palm of skill to-day, it will be said that ye mutually feared the trial, and that ye rushed on death from the mere dread of defeat."

"He says well! He is right! Rudolf Van Diepenholt for ever!" were among the loudly-shouted tributes of applause which followed this speech. It was evident that this candidate for

a bishopric knew the people he had to deal with, and by his united appeal to their interests and their pride, he produced completely the effect he wished. Both parties were evidently brought a little nearer towards reason. The next point was to conciliate each without degrading the self-consequence of either; and that seemed beyond the skill of even Rudolf Van Diepenholt.

"But suppose that we consented to give up our revenge till the sports were finished and the prizes adjudged, we must first receive a concession for Van Hemsted's insult," said Floris Van Borselen.

"We must, we must!" vociferated the Kabblejaws.

"Ere our swords are sheathed, the outrage offered to us in the appearance of this young man must be atoned for!" cried Van Hemsted and the Hoeks.

"By what right dared you insult my son?" exclaimed Van Borselen.

"How durst he come among us with the badge of Burgundy on his breast?" retorted the Hoeks.

"Ye should bow down to it, as the type of your sovereign and liege lord!" uttered one party.

"Rather tear it off and trample it under our feet, if he do not remove or hide it!" cried the other.

And so matters were as likely as ever to terminate in battle and bloodshed; when Vrank Van Borselen actively stepped out in front of his party, before his father or the others could restrain the movement; and his fine figure and ingenuous air, commanding at once admiration and attention, he spoke.

"I claim to be heard in this dispute, first as a stranger even to those who are my friends—secondly, as a native Zealander and in my right as a free citizen—thirdly, as the representative of Duke Philip of Burgundy, whose authority is

owned by at least one half of those present, and has yet to be disproved by the rest."

"Hear him! Let him speak! Go on, go on!" sounded from all sides, and by degrees the throng began to press, gently inwards, as if Vrank formed the centre of general attraction. The women returned to their original places in the crowd; and even the fools stole out from their hiding holes, like snails after a shower.

"I came not here," continued Vrank, "either to offer insult or to bear it. I wear the badge of the sovereign I serve, because I am here on his special service. But I cannot condescend to take offence in my own person at an outburst of hate against my sovereign's crest, neither will I consent to take off or conceal what is my proudest mark of honour, next to these spurs on my heels and this sword in my hand!"

Exclamations of applause followed these words, in which even Van Hemsted himself could not resist joining, for there was a modest

intrepidity in the young knight's bearing that was irresistible to the brave.

"Now,'" resumed Vrank, when he could again command a hearing, "it only remains for me to say what I *will* do, to preserve the peace in this honourable assemblage of the national estates. I will, with my father's permission, and I hope with general approval, withdraw from the meeting, in which I have no personal interest—no object to gain by my presence, and no principle of duty to infringe by my absence."

Loud bursts of applause at this dignified arrangement of the difficulty overwhelmed Vrank from all sides, each party vying with the other, the one to evince their pride, the other to display their generosity. Several of the leading men of either party attempted to be heard, but every individual voice was drowned in the common chorus; while Vrank, having received a word of consent from his father (who saw the prudence, and in fact the necessity of the thing),

gracefully retired from the throng, and before the debate could take any new turn to disturb the unanimity he had produced, he gained his horse, vaulted into the saddle, and quitted the limits of the encampment. But he could not do this as privately as he wished, for several of his father's friends, most of them youths, inspired with a strong feeling of respect at the *yong-heer's** moderation, resolved to shew it by escorting him beyond the bounds. Having performed his part, he did not court any distinction from the crowd of all ranks and both sexes which pressed towards him on his retreat; so, clasping his cloak over his breast, he was not to be distinguished from the grey capped Kabblejaws with whom he rode. As they cleared the lines of the encampment, a procession of burghers came in; and among other stragglers were two females, masked and on horseback,

* A title corresponding to "young Sir" in our language, and corrupted into the less respectful appellative, *youngster*.

attended by a single servitor who rode close behind them, his large cloak and hood, or capuchin (worn indiscriminately by both sexes) not allowing any one to penetrate the incognito of the party, either by means of mistresses or man. As the group of young Kabblejaws made way for these new comers, they passed many jocose and not over-refined remarks on the fair maskers and their follower. A quickened movement of the horses only proved that the riders did not relish the pleasantries and were anxious to escape from them.

In a few minutes more, Vrank exchanged brief leave-taking with his new made friends—he with polished reserve, they with boisterous cordiality. They lavished on him a profusion of invitations to their own and their fathers' castles, and promised him immediate visits at Eversdyke; and finally greeted him with a parting shout, which he escaped from by clapping spurs to his horse, and pressing quickly back on the road by which he had come. He

stopped for a few minutes as the shout died away and the shouters returned to their sports, and he looked back towards the scene he had quitted, more from passing curiosity or listlessness, than from any wish of impressing its features on his memory. He saw the tents standing gaily, and the banners floating brightly, the white flag above all, as the mist rolled off to the sea, or rose up towards the sun, which now lighted the whole scene, and shewed the waves of the full tide, rippling on the shore in wreathes of snow and silver. On the right the spires of the town of Tergoes rose up in the haze, seeming to shake the vapours from their drowsy heads, like a newly awakened dreamer breaking from the fumes of sleep.

Vrank acknowledged to himself that the scene was beautiful and peculiar. But long habit, even stronger than novelty, made him sigh for the accustomed charms of southern landscape, in all the variety of hill and dale and foliage; and this marine view, though

lovely in its kind, wanted the strong link of pleasing associations to enable him thoroughly to enjoy it. He again turned his horse's head, and dropping into a mood of pensive thought, which so often succeeds the tumult of sudden excitement, he let the animal take his own slow pace; and the turbulent scene he had just escaped from was only kept present to his mind by the distant strains of music, mixed with faint shouts, which told him that the jar of discord was quite appeased, and that the sports had begun.

We cannot follow Vrank Van Borselen in all the successive topics of the reverie which occupied him for the two hours consumed in his return to Eversdyke. The quick shifting reflections that rose upon him were as rapid as the undulations of the waves which he saw at his side, as he rode along on the summit of the dyke that separated them from the teeming plains to his left; and his thoughts were moved like those waves by a bright and mysterious

influence that caused their ebb and flow. Yet Vrank was not in actual cogitation on the doctrine of the tides, although he had that analagous feeling to guide him towards the discovery of their secret, which was only made much later than his time. He ran over in a thousand variations the chief subjects that occupied his mind; and let these manifold changes take what turn they might, still the words and looks of the unknown huntress seemed the combined principle which gave the tone to all, and round which all revolved.

## CHAPTER IX.

No sooner had Vrank withdrawn from the encampment, than every one of the assemblage, who a few minutes before were ripe for war, were now actively engaged in preparations for the sport they had so readily abandoned. The archers took their stations in platoons, each under the orders of a leader chosen from among the most expert of the several fraternities. Nobles, burghers, and peasants, strung their bows, and placed their arrows with a frank equality which merged, for one day in the year,

pride, avarice and servility, (the natural badge of the several tribes,) in a feeling of fair and generous rivalry. The fools of the various companies, the only privileged cowards present, who gave way without shame when others were, if but for shame's sake, obliged to stand firm, now gave free expression to the delight that many others suppressed, for fear of being thought too happy at the general escape from danger. But the truly brave, and they were a large majority, loudly joined in shouts and gusts of joy, for they who are readiest for fight on due cause of quarrel, are ever the first to acknowledge the pleasure of escaping its necessity. The little *pylrapers*, or arrow-gatherers, boys lightly clad, with osier hats, and each a long narrow basket on his arm in which to deposit the picked-up weapons, took their posts, and the fools began their gambols, which formed a leading feature in the doings of the day. A given prize and some peculiar privileges for the year to come, were the reward of him who dis-

tinguished himself, by some feat of a superior mixture of absurdity with the coarse wit which the rough-spun manufacture of native drollery allowed. Many efforts were therefore made by the fellows who "wore motly in their heads," to distort poor humanity into the most grotesque and humiliating forms; they all appeared in the masquerade best suiting their tastes, some as mis-shapen monsters, or strained representations of beasts or birds. But one threw an air of satire into his metamorphosis, by appearing covered with scales, like a huge fish, an artificial tail tied up in the Kabblejaw fashion; and appended to the monstrous effigy of a cod's head, which covered his real one, was a huge hook; while a bonnet of the prevailing cut and pattern of both factions surmounted the head, one side made of grey and the other of red cloth. This fellow rolled about through the different groups with the true impartiality of a place-hunter, sometimes attaching himself to one party, sometimes to the other, taking money from each

and cajoling with all, with a burlesque veracity of time-servingness, that had more effect in putting both parties in good-humour than any thing short of a well-fought battle could have produced.

In a little while every thing was arranged, and the arrows and stones from long-bow or cross-bow, whizzed and whistled through the air, singly or in vollies, according to the order of the day. The three plain figures of birds, in all the nakedness of wood and paint, were successively shot at, missed, or hit by the three estates of the meeting, which had each its own mark for separate practice; the feathered nondescript before mentioned was reserved for the general trial of skill, at which all the estates were entitled to discharge their shafts. This was so constructed that when struck in any of the extremities it turned, spinning round on the iron pivot which fixed it to the stake; but when hit directly in the centre of the body, in the part which was considered to represent vitality,

a spring was started, causing an instant uprising of a laurel-crown or wreath of flowers, which was immediately placed on the head of the successful marksman or markswoman—for females were not excluded from the right of archery on these occasions.

And now, a certain number of trials having taken place at the three unfledged effigies, lots were drawn for the order of succession in the honour of aiming at the other. Some of the managing umpires, one of whom was Zegher Van Hemsted, were observed to make a rather shuffling distribution of the lots as they were drawn by the different candidates; and it was found that the first two fell to the share of two of his own party, and the third to one of the masked ladies who had entered the shooting-ground at so late a period of the meeting; and the lower members indiscriminately to Hoeks or Kabblejaws, male or female.

The first of the archers, a practised marksman, covered with medals, the tokens of pre-

vious success, shot away the three arrows without effect, having only once struck a feather off the plumed effigy's tail. The second aspirant, also a tried man, equally decorated as the former, was scarcely more successful, having missed with his first two arrows, and only hitting an outspread wing with the third, which sent the bird spinning round for a few seconds, but did not entitle him to the prize.

The masked lady next took up her bow, and drawing her arrow to the head with careful aim, it darted straight off, struck the mark in the right place, shook from it a shower of plumage, and sent the laurel-crown springing up in triumphant elevation.

A shout, which sounded as if it had been ready rehearsed, if not quite ready made, burst from the Hoeks, who gathered round the fair bow-woman, for fair she was presumed to be. The adverse party joined in equal demonstrations of applause, to her who had no semblance of party; the laurel-crown was lowered from

its spike, brought forward, and given into the hands of Floris Van Borselen, the senior of the judges, indiscriminately chosen among the nobles. He took the emblem of honour, and advancing close to the lady, who leant gracefully on her bow, he placed the wreath on her head, and uttered some set form of compliments, and cried aloud—

"Long live our sovereign lady"——

"Of the arbolette!" he would have added, according to the phrase in these sportive coronations; but the sentence was cut short by Van Hemsted and his friends, who vociferated a repetition of Van Borselen's words.

"Long live our sovereign lady!" rang along the beach, sunk into the sands, and died on the surface of the sea, which had no echoes to return the sounds; and when with respectful violence the mask was (according to custom,) removed from the lady's face, the gazing throng beheld the beautiful and beaming countenance of Jacqueline of Holland

Promptitude and stratagem seemed on this day the chief tactics of the Hoeks; surprise and consternation the lot of their opponents. The Kabblejaws stood with open mouths and staring eyes, true emblems of their fishy prototype. A serried phalanx of adherents now took their station behind and at each side of Jacqueline, who stood out in front, with all her accustomed air of intrepidity, whenever danger was to be grappled with or difficulty overcome. The leaders of the party were close by, to support with applause every word she uttered, or obey with ardour any act she might command.

"Brave Zealanders! my subjects and my friends!" said she, in a firm tone, "I am come among ye to save ye the necessity of the debate which was meant to follow these sports; I am here to claim my hereditary rights as your sovereign. Who is there to combat them? Does not Heaven itself seem to sanction my title, which no one dare gainsay? Has not a miracle enabled this weak arm to gain the prize

in your sports, at the very first attempt? Your own hands, even without your will, have placed this emblem of dominion on my brow—your own voices, speaking the involuntary fiat of justice, have proclaimed my authority!"

Van Borselen and his faction began to recover from their astonishment, and various murmurs arose among them.

"It was a trick—our words were stopped short—we never meant to hail you more than queen of the sports—we reject your claims to our allegiance—we deny you for our sovereign."

Such were the replies made by the Kabbeljaws. The Hoeks shouted to the skies.

"Long live our sovereign lady! Long live Jacqueline, Countess of Holland, Zealand and Hainault!"

And as the shout died away, the strain was taken up by one single and shrilly voice, that of the double-liveried fool, who screamed out harshly—

"Long live Jacqueline!" and quickly placed himself in front of her party.

"Hearken to me, mistaken men!" exclaimed the countess, waving her hand for silence towards Van Borselen and his party. "Is there one among you who can reason on your assertions, and disprove my title by argument? I am ready to list to him; and will, by the mouth of my faithful adherents here present, answer and refute every objection that can be made."

"I accept the challenge, countess," said Van Borselen, "for such we acknowledge you, though no more our sovereign, your birth-right being vested by marriage in your husband our legal lord, and by him deputed to the potent and magnificent prince, Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, Governor and Rewart of Holland and Zealand, to whom life and health!"

"Long live Duke Philip, our governor and rewart!" resounded from the Kabblejaw columns.

"Philip for ever!" cried the fool, wriggling across to the side of the last shouters, jingling the bells that hung from his fins, and chuckling

with laughter, it might be thought, at both parties.

"Speak then, Meere Borselen!" cried Van Hemsted, "argue the point of your treason, and cease those senseless shouts, which even yon fools laugh to scorn."

"'Tis you who are a traitor, Heer Hemsted. I fling back your foul reproach. Is not Duke John your liege lord, as he is mine? Is not Philip his legal deputy?"

"No—neither one nor the other. Our sovereign is this princess, here, the descendant and successor of twenty-six counts, and in her own right our lady liege. An illegal and nominal marriage with her cousin-german, the shadow of manhood or princedom, brings no attaint to her right, which I and my friends are ready to uphold."

"Her marriage was legal, by holy dispensation," exclaimed Roland Uterken, father to the young man whose reinforcements from Flanders were hourly looked for by the Kabblejaws.

"'Tis now dissolved, by sacred rescript," replied Arien Van Hemsted, the brother of Zegher.

"'Tis false!" cried Van Borselen; "though well we know such rescript was sought for by Glocester, her para—"

"Hold there, friend Floris!" cried the fool, putting his hand before Van Borselen's mouth "Had you finished that filthy word, the argument would have ended with swords not tongues."

"Away with this impudent idiot!" exclaimed Van Borselen, pushing aside the fool.

"Privilege, privilege!" shouted the latter; "fools, all take part with your fellow, and who then will be left to oppose me?"

"Will no one stop that mummer's mouth?" cried Van Borselen.

"And let old Floris talk all the nonsense! Privilege for Meere Borselen! Privilege, privilege!" exclaimed the fool again, slipping through the hands of those who made no vio-

lent efforts to retain him, and dancing across to the opposite party, who hailed his return with shouts of laughter.

"Again I say 'tis false that the marriage is broken or the contract with Glocester confirmed by the pontiff," resumed Van Borselen, with impetuous gravity, and drawing forth a parchment—"here is the attested copy of his holiness's letter to the Dukes of Burgundy and Brabant, to falsify the assertion."

"And here is the pontiff's bill of divorce and separation!" cried the man who had accompanied Jacqueline and Benina Beyling, (and who until now had stood close to the former,) holding up a scroll, flinging off his capuchin as he spoke, and displaying the sturdy figure of Ludwick Van Monfoort, in the full costume of his party.

A yell of acclamation burst from the Hoeks on recognising their intrepid leader, whom some had expected and others knew to be among them. The bravest of the Kabblejaws shrunk

for a moment at beholding their fiercest opponent, whom they one and all thought to be in the exile of his lovely Island of Urk.

"Bravo, bravo!" cried the fool. "Long live old Ludwick! Long live Jacqueline! Long live the Hoeks!—that is as long as they have the upper hand."

"This is meet—this fits well in all its parts," said Van Borselen, recovering his self-command, but still in the imperfect utterance of passion. "Jugglery, forgery, and treason all combined —and a banished felon at the head of all!"

"Floris Van Borselen, thou hast said, and I swear by the blood of the martyrs, those words shall stick in thy throat again, in the death-gasp which this hand shall give thee!"

Van Monfoort spoke his threat in a tone and with a look of such calm yet terrible ferocity, that it thrilled through both friends and foes. He caught his gorget in one hand, and flung aside the collar of his cloak with the other, as though they choked him. He was the first to break the silence.

"So much," said he, "for our personal affair—now for the more important matter of this meeting. Men of Zealand, I solemnly demand your sworn allegiance to Jacqueline, our rightful sovereign. Here is the Bull which annuls her marriage with the deboshed, stigmatic John of Brabant, and confirms her rights to your fealty and faith."

"Fellow countrymen and friends! be not cajoled or frightened by flattery or threats!" exclaimed Van Borselen. "Though Holland set the example of revolt, let our islands be firm and loyal. Listen not to this Dutchman, nor the degenerate Zealanders who back him. His statement is false—your scroll must be forged. Here is the pontiff's letter, signed by his sacred hand, and sealed with the holy seal of St. Peter."

"Read! read the rescript!" cried a hundred voices.

"Ah, my friends! you ask more than I can perform," replied Floris—"the sacred document is in Latin."

"Read your Bull, then, Van Monfoort!" exclaimed the crowd.

"By the mass!" cried he, with a grim smile, "ye have done a miracle—ye have brought Van Borselen and me to a level. This scroll also is in Latin—at least I believe so—but I can safely swear it is not in Dutch, and beyond that I pretend to no skill."

"Nor have you much in that," said the fool, while a hollow murmur of laughter ran through either party. On this the fool, who seemed ready to take every opportunity of restoring good humour, danced out in the middle of the throng and said—

"I told you all as much as that if ye wanted a sage, ye might send for him to Bethleem. But as wisdom may come out of a fool's mouth, what do ye think of making Rudolf Van Diepenholt read both the scrolls?"

A shout of acclamation was the answer, and the curate of the fishing-boats was immediately put forward. He seemed ready enough for the

task; and taking the documents from the hostile chiefs, he examined them closely, while a solemn and anxious silence was preserved by the throng, which little by little narrowed the space that had erewhile separated the parties.

"Stand back, ye rabble route! Back, Hoeks! Back, Kabblejaws!" cried the fool, running down the lines at either side, shaking the bells of his bauble in the faces of the foremost, and thus keeping the crowd in proper limits. "Stand back all! Would ye stifle this honest priest, and so destroy the eighth wonder of the world? and smother *me*, the only fool among ye who has the sense to act wisely, and the wisdom to talk nonsense? I'll warrant ye his reverence here requires air—for if he has not a couple of pontiffs sticking in his maw, I pledge myself to swallow my bauble, bells and all!"

"In good faith, the fool has hit on the truth," said Rudolf; "and neither of these proud nobles has disgraced himself by a lie.

These scrolls came from the rival popes—Van Borselen's is signed by Martin V., and Van Monfoort's by Benedict XIII."

"What! by Peter de Luna! By that Spanish impostor! old Olla Podrida!" scoffingly cried Roland Uterken.

"And is he not as good as his Italian rival, that obstinate anti-christ?" retorted Zegher Van Hemsted.

"Anti-christ in your teeth!" said Van Borselen.

"Ah, what tough picking you give my poor friend Zegher!" said the fool, in a tone of plaintive mockery.

"Come, come, brave lords, an end to these cabals!" exclaimed Rudolf Van Diepenholt; "they but waste the day and wear out the patience of every reasonable man. Can the conflicting decrees of two opposing priests suffice to set a nation by the ears? What are these rival popes? If one advances, the other retreats—one like some animal fearful of the land, the

other like a creature apprehensive of the water."

"This is irreverent on thy part, Rudolf!" said Van Borselen. "Remember thou art a priest, though well I know thee for a tainted one. Lollardy and Wickliffe-learning are thy tenets—thou art little better than a heretic—at the very best a reformer, who would turn the head of church and state."

"Oh, that he could practise on your addle pate!" said the fool, running out of reach of the indignant Kabblejaws.

"Prithee, Van Borselen, meddle not with me," said Rudolf, unruffled by the serious charge against him. "Let us stick to the question of these popes. Why should Countess Jacqueline pay respect to Martin?"

"He legalized her marriage," said one of the Kabblejaws.

"The best reason for its being invalid, for he is himself but an usurper," cried a voice from among the Hoeks

" In my mind," resumed Rodolf, " the acts of neither of these self-styled popes is worth a straw; and both being nullities, the countess is and ought to be considered free to act on the dictates of nature and reason. What! shall these aged and decrepid priests for the short remnant of their lives endanger private peace and the salvation of the christian world! what is the mock sceptre which these spiritual sovereigns wield?"

" Something like this," said the fool, holding up his bauble.

" What is the tiara, on such inefficient heads?" exclaimed the canon, not heeding the interruption or the laugh it excited.

" A fool's cap, without bells," answered the fool.

" A truce, a truce, my young friend," said Rudolf smiling, " there is a time for all things, and even assumed folly may be out of season."

" Not till real wisdom come into fashion, so I have still a long day for my sport," replied the fool.

"Give me back the pontiff's letter," cried Van Borselen sternly. "It is in vain to argue against impiety and rebellion. This meeting may now best dissolve. Whoever holds true and stands staunch to his legal lord may follow me. And for ye, obstinate men, who hold the cause of that false countess, whose crimes I forbear to name, know that a force is this instant perhaps coming to our aid that will crush your rebellion, even before great Philip himself appears."

At this instant a flash was seen to lighten through the distant fog, which, far out at sea, had settled into one thick but sun-lit cloud, and hovered over the waters, like some huge bird that could not rise into an upward flight.

"Mark ye that flash?" cried Rudolf Van Diepenholt, "hear ye that peal?" as a low rumbling sound rolled along the water, and died faintly as it reached the shore. "Again —another! they are not chance bursts of thunder, men of Zealand—they are the signals

of mortal aid, sent by Heaven to the cause of virtue and right. Hark, how the artillery peals! and list ye the music sounding on the waters? They are the heralds of England's power, of great Glocester's friendship—to rejoice all true hearts, and make the false ones quail. Now, my brave fool, you may caper and jump for joy."

"There then goes my cap, faction's silly emblem—there my bauble, the plaything type of power—wisdom to-day might play the fool, and shall not folly learn to be wise?" exclaimed the grotesque representative of motley faction, assumed to suit his purpose; while with every word he flung away the trappings of his mummery, and soon shewed to view the person of one of the wittiest, bravest, and most generous youths of his time—Lewis, bastard of Hainault, the natural brother of Jacqueline, who loved him with an affection that the heart's best feelings had legitimatized. Having held out to the very last chance of serving her cause, in his

castle of Scaudeuvre in Hainault, he at length gave up a hopeless contest, and taking his course to Avignon, where Pope Benedict XIII. held his court, he obtained the divorce which Martin V. had refused; and had arrived with the important document the very day previous to the meeting, at which we have seen he acted so conspicuous a part, as accordant to his gay humour, as it was serviceable to the cause he considered his own.

At this new apparition of so distinguished a friend of Jacqueline's, breaking into identity from his masquerade, the downcast Kabblejaws ventured not one word, but turned with the straining looks of despair on the developement of the force that seemed destined to overwhelm them with ruin.

A few more discharges from the artillery totally dispersed the cloud that had so long obscured the English fleet, which now came breaking through the floating fragments of mist and smoke, in all the majesty and beauty peculiar to

such a spectacle. The ships of those days, though, individually, far less graceful and elegant than those of our own, formed, when seen in a mass, as on the present occasion, a pageant much more shewy. Their construction had been greatly changed within half a century. They were now of much larger size. Half way up the masts were castellated platforms, from which stones and arrows might be discharged in fight; and decks were about this period added, with a most cumbrous but imposing wooden building at either end, ingeniously embarrassing to the movements and management of the vessel, but giving to the squadron the appearance of a floating town. The ships were decked with gilding and painting; armorial bearings and badges were embroidered on various parts; banners of costly workmanship and brilliant colours were hung out, and the sails were of purple, azure, and other hues, shining with work of gold. Add to these appearances the glittering mass of armour, presented by the

peopled decks; the gleaming of weapons in the sun, the shouts of the crew, and the crash of martial music bursting over the waters, and a notion may be imagined of the effect produced by the English fleet, which now came along in all its pomp and pride.

As the ships drew nearer and nearer to the shore, and coasted along the narrow channel, saluting as they passed, the enthusiasm of Jacqueline's friends grew beyond all restraint. Following the example of young Lewis, of Van Monfoort, the Hemsteds, and other leaders, they flung themselves on their knees before her, swore allegiance to her sway, and vowed their lives to her service. Many of those who had so sternly opposed her, now gave way to that impulse that leads men to go with the stream, and makes them offer up incense to success. But Floris Van Borselen, Roland Uterkin, and several other sturdy Kabblejaws withdrew in sullen enmity, with muttered vows of unceasing hatred. And whether it was the effect of this

unbending hostility, or that some thoughts of Glocester's dubious conduct flashed across her mind, or that some other secret pang had fixed its cold stings in her heart, certain it was that Jacqueline in this proud moment wore not the air of triumph, but looked more like the victim of a sacrifice than the idol of a nation.

## CHAPTER X.

When the discomfited Kabblejaws retired from the scene just described, they held a hurried council on the best measures to be taken in this unlooked-for crisis. The spirit of faction, often more active than the purest essence of patriotism, excited the confederates into energy and union. Couriers were despatched all over the islands of Zealand, and into Holland, advising their partizans of the danger; and Floris Van Borselen took upon himself to send off his son Vrank, in the utmost speed, to warn his

brother James to hurry the reinforcements of young Uterken, and then to hasten to the castle of Hesdin in Picardy, where Duke Philip held his court, and was, with his wonted magnificence, entertaining the Dukes of Bedford and Britanny, with a numerous train of nobles, in a series of feasts and shews of unusual splendour.

On Van Borselen's return to Eversdyke, full of the important affairs of his country, he hurried to the family sitting-room, in search of his son, whom he found, to his amaze and indignation, tumbling on the rush-covered floor, with a group of his brothers and sisters, enacting the part of some terrible animal—

> "The Indian griffin with the glistening eyes,
> The fiery dragon,"

or some other insatiate monster, with the unbounded applause of his young companions, who never before, and probably never afterwards, spent a couple of such hours of boiste-

rous delight as had rapidly flown over in this exquisite sport.

"Holy Martyrs! St. Peter, and St. Paul! Virgin Mother! was ever the like of this beheld?" exclaimed the astounded chieftain, standing in the door-way, with his eyes fixed, and his hands upraised.

"Why, Vrank! Heer Van Borselen! Sir Francon! Son—jongheer—Knight! do I live to see this? Do you know who you are? Do you remember the scene of this morning?"

"I was striving to forget it, father," said Vrank, rising up, and composing the ruffled state of his attire.

"Striving to forget it!" echoed the chief. "Do you hear this, Vrowe? You who sit there as satisfied as if you were gazing at the Dance of Death, the Descent into Hell, or some other frolicsome pageant, such as the French mummers gave out at Middleburg.—Is that fit work for our son?—Are you not ashamed of such doings?"

"My good master, blame me not—I did rebuke the dear boy for so rumpling his lovely suit of kersey and taffeta—and see!—may Saint Hedgwiga, the patroness of Housewifery, grant me grace, if here isn't a rent in his sleeve that would take old Stoop Van Stichel an hour to fine-draw!"

"A rent in his sleeve!—rumpling his taffeta! Oh, is it come to this? Is the solemn pride of the Van Borselens sunk so low that their degenerate sons turn tumblers and heel-kickers, while mothers look on and laugh, insensible to their own disgrace!"

"Oh, my gracious lord, speak not those cruel words, nor look those severer looks! In sooth I meant no harm, nor did Vrank, I'll warrant him. Alas, it is rare that we see a scene of frolic or joy; and it made my heart glad to look on this! But it shall end here—the children shall retire, and we shall get the sleeve of Vrank's doublet soon stitched up."

"Speak not to me of doublets or stitching,

good wife, while the fate of our country hangs on a thread! Vrank, you must within an hour set out for Flanders, and thence with the utmost speed for Duke Philip's court at Hesdin."

A burst of sorrow from mother and children answered this sentence of death to the brief joys of Eversdyke.

"Within an hour!" exclaimed the Vrowe, "what, ere the evening repast can be got ready! recal your words, good my lord—let our dear boy at least tarry till he eat one hearty meal—till the young crane just now caught and plucked has time to be roasted, and the porpoise stews tender in its own fat—and the march-pane can be frizzled with comfits——"

"Peace, peace, good wife! If Vrank have thoughts of hunger let him eat whatever comes to hand—but I trust he has still enough of the spirit of his race not to think of feasting while his country claims all his care. Follow me, son, and receive my instructions!"

Within the limited hour Vrank was once

more upon the waves, with ample advices for his journey, and in the lubberly-looking skiff which, to the disgrace of Dutch ship-building, seems still the model of their vessels. The dark blue pennon of Eversdyke was at the mast head, and the flag of Burgundy at the stern. Oost, the dyke-digger, furnished with messages and such tokens of credence as in those days answered the stead of letters, for the Frison chiefs in the interest of Burgundy, took his place at the prow; and as he leant over, with his huge *turquoise* in his hand, he looked a rough-modelled figure of Hercules, or some other club-man of antiquity. Vrank sat at the stern; and as the breeze bore him away from the rude home, his visit to which seemed like the flitting shadow of a dream, a feeling of melancholy came across him, which is only to be excited by a separation from what we love. And did Vrank, then, really love this stern abode, this unsocial monument of his family's harsh pride and ungracious power? It was even so. The

deep-fixed instinct which leads men back, in despite of reason, to rest a portion of their own pride on the mere antiquity of their race, was at that moment working powerfully in the young man's bosom. He had felt none of it in approaching Eversdyke. Long habits of the world had overcome the early feeling, and he rather despised than venerated those tokens of an obscure aristocracy, which he had learned to look on as a very dubious honour. But this short contract with the old customs of his forefathers, this new breathing of his native atmosphere of feudality, revived the latent principle which he believed extinct; and as he gazed back on the gray walls of the castle he could not suppress the thought, that he should like to live and die there after all!

Another feeling, of a kind quite new to him, contributed to strengthen this awakened, rather than created, attachment to his home. It was the pleasure he had felt in even two hours' acquaintanceship with those young relations, bound

to him by a tie of which he scarcely before understood the nature, but which, as experience has told many a man, is too strong to be severed by absence or time, or almost by ingratitude and wrong. Vrank only knew this new sentiment of brotherly love in its most endearing aspect. He thought it delicious then; and in after life he never forgot the two hours' romping with the young playfellows, who had so naturally established, without claiming, an equality with him, and to whose level he had at once descended, without the pain of an effort or the consciousness of degradation.

To those young objects, who had in so short a space gained such a hold upon his sympathy, his sudden departure was a real misfortune, in proportion to the delightful surprise of his coming, and the wonderment he excited while he staid, by his handsome looks, his fine dress, and above all by his active gambols on all-fours, and the magnificent growl with which he played the monster. Brother Vrank, as they imagined

him, had ever been their beau-ideal of all that was sublime and beautiful; that he had surpassed their notions was probably less a proof of his merits than of the imperfect growth of their imagination. But certain it is that the force of that impression never wore away, and those delighted brothers and sisters ever afterwards considered Vrank Van Borselen as one of the finest specimens of mankind—as well they might, on even better grounds than those of early impressions.

Good Vrowe Bona was thoroughly grieved at the bereavement of her dear boy's society. She felt as though she could have gazed on him for ever, and as he left the castle she was strongly impressed with the belief that she should never see him more. For many hours she knew not how to escape from this painful feeling; her husband's announcement of new hostilities seemed to overwhelm her with unusual terror. She knew that Vrank was to come back with Duke Philip's forces; and a heavy presentiment,

which, with the weaknesses of superstition, she encouraged rather than repressed, told her that the coming contest would be fraught with dire calamity to the house of Borselen. Glad of any escape from such sad bodings, she hurried off to her homely occupations, like a regal functionary of a more recent date,

> "Nothing loth
> To marinate her fish, and season broth."

During the progress of these home-feelings and domestic considerations on the part of the family of Eversdyke, the elated party of the Hoeks indulged, as was fairly allowable, in some extravagance. For the first time for a long course of years they saw themselves with the upper hand, and if it opened cordially to the grasp of good fortune, it is not astonishing that it should become sternly clenched in the very face of the foe. The Hoeks, in fact, assumed an attitude of vigorous decision; they soon shewed themselves at all points in great

force. The English troops, under the guidance of Lord Fitz-walter, landed without opposition on the coasts of Holland and the Island of Schowen, and spread themselves in the various towns, which now unhesitatingly acknowledged Jacqueline, in virtue of the right which never fails to be awarded to might. Young Lewis of Hainault, Van Monfoort, the Hemsteds, and other leaders, put themselves at the head of their respective contingents. Rudolph Van Diepenholt set forth on a round of exhortation to the sea-faring interests of the state; and Jacqueline, overcoming all personal emotions, took at once that attitude of active influence to which her station was so well entitled, and her character so well adapted.

And very soon was the whole exertion of her own and her friends' energies called forth. The limited theatre of action hurried on events and crowded the doers into a narrow space. Ere Vrank Van Borselen reached the shore of East Flanders, John Uterken, with his expedition of

considerable force, had left it; and, promptly navigating those inland seas, he within two days made his landing good, near Haarlem, to which place his father had retired, and with equal despatch and skill he advanced upon the town. But ere he could reach it, or take up a position of defence, he was vigorously attacked by Jacqueline's forces, under Fitz-walter and the other leaders; while she herself, her bow in hand, and mounted on a gallant steed, a gift from the English lord to replace the one she had lost, rode along the ranks, harangued the troops, and was present throughout the action. The Flemings were, after a bold resistance, totally defeated and dispersed, young Uterken escaping from the field with great difficulty, and taking refuge with his father in Haarlem.

During the fight, the English, the Hollanders, and Zealanders, vied with each other in acts of courage; but when it was over the rivalry ceased. Then faction took up the task which

valour had but half finished, and the butcher-work of warfare began. Every Hoek who held a prisoner instantly commenced putting him to death, without regard to the pleadings of humanity or justice; these unfortunate men being Flemings, and therefore meriting on no pretext to be put out of the pale of generous hostility. Jacqueline was reposing after the fatigue and excitement of the action, in a tent not far from the scene, attended by her faithful Benina, who, though unable to overcome the timidity which kept her distant from the conflict, was ready at the princess's side to congratulate her on its result. Lord Fitz-walter, too, was with her, as he had been all through the fight, forcing her to keep aloof from its more imminent perils, and when her courage urged her on, opposing his armour-covered body between her and the arrows, which flew thick, but from which neither of them received any harm.

While they now exchanged hurried observations on the event, and mutual expressions of

compliment and courtesy, an English officer came forward and announced to his general that their Dutch allies were, without mercy, despatching the prisoners in the most summary manner.

"What then, is there some new attack? Are we surprised? Is the victory to be gained again?" cried Fitz-walter, springing forward and seizing his sword, in the prompt movement of courage that never imagines defeat.

"No, my lord," replied the officer, "there is not a foe to be seen, but those poor wretches whom the Hoeks are doing to death."

"This must not be, Madam?" said Fitz-walter inquiringly; but Jacqueline had anticipated the question, by quitting her seat and rushing towards the opening of the tent. Benina and the Englishmen, with some guards and attendants, followed the countess. Impelled by humanity, she ran forward to the nearest group of soldiers, whom she saw indeed employed in their ferocious work, killing with

knife, sword or battle-axe the defenceless Flemings, who with scarce an exception stood the butchery in the sturdy fierceness of despair, scorning to ask the boon of life which they knew would be refused them. But one wretch seeing a sudden gleam of hope in the approach of Jacqueline, sprang from the man who already raised his battle-axe to give him the death-blow, and with loud cries for mercy ran towards her, whose looks beamed with the angel attributes of power and pity. The disappointed murderer flew after his victim; and ere the latter could reach the safeguard he reckoned on, a blow desperately meant but imperfectly aimed, fell on his shoulder instead of his head, and he sunk weltering in blood at his pursuer's feet. The latter immediately flung down his battle-axe, and drawing the dagger from his girdle he prepared to plunge it in the wounded man's throat. But at this moment Fitz-walter who had outrun the rest, seized his arm, and Jacqueline, close to him, commanded him to release the Fleming.

"Release him!" cried the astonished Giles Postel, Van Monfoort's squire, for it was he who enacted this ferocious part. "Do you not see, Madam, that he is one of those rascal Flemings?" and he accompanied the words by a sudden jerk, which freed his arm from Fitz-walter's grasp, and brought the dagger close to his prostrate prisoner's throat.

"Wretch!" cried Jacqueline, throwing herself on her knees, and placing her hands before the dagger's point, while Fitz-walter and the other officers seized Giles Postel, and violently separated him from his gasping victim.

"Villain!" exclaimed Fitz-walter, "how can you do this cruel deed?"

"Villain, you call me?" said Postel, in rude and broken French, and with a brutal tone, "and for killing my lawful prisoner? How many did you and your English king put to death after the fight of Agincourt?"

"Fellow!" exclaimed the Englishman.

"Oh, answer him not, Lord Fitz-walter!"

cried Jacqueline. "Fly, fly and stop the massacre! Look at yon cruel chiefs, whom I blush to call my countrymen, how they stand coolly by and see these monstrous deeds!"

Then turning to Giles Postel, she continued—

"Base-minded slave, how durst thou parley with yon noble lord, or bandy words when thou shouldst obey? For this bloody act, and for thy insolence, I command thee never to meet my sight again. Ludwick Van Monfoort even shall not claim thy pardon."

"Your mother, countess, would not treat me thus—she is less squeamish," replied the squire with a sullen scowl, which at once made the blood mount to Jacqueline's brow and thrill in her veins.

"Audacious wretch! Wouldst thou dare asperse my noble mother?"

"Asperse!" muttered the fellow, with a malignant and contemptuous curl of his lip.

"Holy Virgin, grant me patience!" exclaimed Jacqueline. "Away, miscreant, lest I

send thee prematurely to thy doom! Go, skulk among the butchers of the camp—live in the shambles, and never dare appear again in honourable arms!"

Giles Postel met this sentence with a look of ruffian rage; but he did not move.

"Oh, God!" continued Jacqueline, raising the head of the wounded man, "why am I forced into scenes like these, which I must work out with such vile instruments! May not the blood of this poor wretch which stains my robe discolour my reputation? For how will history tell this murderous tale? May not its heavy hand, that never falls light on princes, load me with the odium of the deed I execrate, and its false pages echo the pestilent breath that even now taints my fame!"

"It shall not be my fault else!" muttered Postel, with a diabolical expression of countenance, as he picked up his battle-axe, wiped the blood from its blade, and slowly retired. Jacqueline, with Benina and her attend-

ants, quickly followed up this first instance of her humanity, and in as far as it was possible she put a stop to the massacre. Many lives were saved by her means and the assistance of the English troops, who, having no particular cause of hatred, were on this occasion as ready to be the saviours, as they would have been in their own personal quarrels, to become the destroyers of the beaten foe. For such was the spirit of the age, in which an idolatry for what was called honour, and a disregard for every feeling of humanity, seemed the ruling principles of man.

As to Jacqueline's conduct on this occasion, while we pronounce it generous in one aspect, we can hardly call it just in another. Giles Postel acted quite in unison with his fellows, and with those who should have known better and felt less fiercely. It is natural to abhor the tiger-principle of cold-blooded cruelty, wise to prevent it, but not fair to hate the beast, formed by instinct, or the being made of habit. At any rate it is unwise to turn either the brute or

the human monster on ourselves. But a bold and proud mind overlooks consequences and scorns them; it flies to the rescue, nor regards results. So did Jacqueline; and she soon had cause to rue, although perhaps she did not repent her conduct.

The effects of this first battle in Jacqueline's favour, were, as is usual in such cases, prodigious. The wavering became decided, the timid bold, and the brave prudent. Cowards are ruined by success, for they invariably become rash. But the courageous man who is calm and unruffled in the contest, is sure to plant reflection on the vantage ground of victory. Another action soon took place between the adverse parties, near Gouda. But in that affair neither English nor Flemings had to do. It was one of those exquisite bits of social slaughter, so cherished by Floris Van Borselen—and not by him alone—and Hoeks and Kabblejaws there met hand to hand, without any intrusive foreigners to snatch their

pleasures or share them. The latter faction was again defeated; and the triumph of the victory soon reached the walls of Utrecht, and half rejoiced, half terrified, our old acquaintance, Zweder Van Culemburg, the very reverend count bishop of that important place.

For the worthy prelate, during all the rapid circumstances of Jacqueline's success, had been tossed in a conflicting tumult of doubt. It was not from any lack of the craven impulse above alluded to that he did not become as rashly impetuous as any coward in the country. Had he mixed in the tide of victory, he would no doubt have partaken the gale of triumph. But he was quite aloof from all the bustling excitement of action. He had certainly on frequent occasions harangued from the altar and held forth in the pulpit, in a very martial tone. He recommended his people to put on their armour and to gird their loins, and made sundry allusions to Gabriel's fiery sword and the urim and thummim of Aaron's breast-plate. But while all

these scriptural exhortations seemed to mark him on the high flood of valour, there was a sort of back-water of what is generally known as its better part, that regularly brought back Bishop Zweder at night to the very place he had started from in the morning, and preserved him in a state of most agitating uncertainty. The results of this will be seen in the sequel. But in the mean time the chapter and people of Utrecht went on vigorously in the good cause which their prelate left in abeyance. Their ships were promptly fitted out and manned. Jacqueline's light blue ensign floated on them; and William of Brederode, her gallant admiral, soon cleft the Zuyder Zee with fifty prows, of vessels impelled by favouring winds and the oars of her staunch adherents.

## CHAPTER XI.

Yet while all went thus apparently well with Jacqueline, she alone formed a contrast to the elation of her party. She neglected nothing that could serve the common cause; her activity was untiring; she sped from place to place; received and replied to deputations from the towns; and presided over every movement, civil or military. Yet all was performed with the air of an automaton, that has the faculty without the feeling of action. Common observers did not perceive this; for there was at all times a

high, not to say haughty bearing in our heroine, that was rarely changed in her intercourse with ordinary people, and through which they could not penetrate, to discover if she was affected by weal or woe. But to those in her intimacy the depression of her mind was evident, even though they could not fathom its inmost depth. Her brother, Lewis of Hainault, and Lord Fitz-walter saw and marvelled at it. Benina Beyling alone was in her confidence, and alone knew the truth.

It was now four days after the victory of Gouda, in which Jacqueline had borne no share, and she was within an hour of entering her town of Amersfort at the head of a large portion of her native troops. The English allies were all concentrated and cantoned in the island of Schowen, their head quarters being the town of Zuric Zee. It was not thought politic to excite any feeling of rivalry in the good patriots of Holland, against the foreigners whose superior discipline and equipments might give rise to

humiliating comparisons. Lord Fitz-walter, therefore, attended Jacqueline's movements without any apparent command, and more as the representative of Glocester, her affianced lord, than as the commander of the English army. He rode close to her on the present occasion, accompanied by Lewis of Hainault; and the lively sallies of the one, with the serious efforts of the other, were exerted to the utmost to cheer the object of their equal anxiety, and make her wear the best air in entering the town, which was her chosen residence, the seat of her government, and where her mother awaited her arrival with all the energy of a proud spirit anxious to display its triumph. But all the efforts of the gay brother or the grave lord (and in the gravity of the Englishman there was an emotion deeper than mere diplomacy,) were ineffectual to subdue the profound air of melancholy which oppressed the victorious Jacqueline.

In all her movements from place to place, Jac-

queline rejected the use of those horse-litters, the common conveyance of women of rank; and being most expert and graceful in the management of her palfrey, her delight in the exercise was probably mixed with pride in displaying herself to the people in the most becoming aspect. She now rode along, accompanied by a suite befitting her state. Several attendant ladies formed the most attractive part of her train; and among them Benina held, as usual, the place closest to her mistress. At about a league's distance from Amersfort a halt was made, to finally arrange the order of the procession in which the town was to be entered, and the Countess Dowager of Hainault, with the deputation of citizens, be met on an occasion so important. While the chiefs busied themselves in their various stations, Jacqueline beckoned Benina towards her, and riding a little apart from the rest, she spoke—

"Come close to me, Benina—keep near me in this meeting with my mother—in this double

trial of her shame and my own. Even though I may not seek the solace of thy words, thy very looks of sympathy will support me."

"My duty ever keeps me where my gracious mistress wills—and would that I had power to remove the feeling I am so little able to relieve! —to shew the injustice of her harsh judgment on herself."

"Benina, you speak against your conviction."

"So may the Virgin help me, Madam, as I speak truth! I think you have no cause for self-reproach, yet I see you suffer, as though you were as criminal as you are guiltless."

"Benina, thou art thyself of noble blood—thou knowest the pure pride of womanhood—and yet thou holdest that I, a princess, am not disgraced by what would have brought shame to the simplest gentlewoman of my train!"

"Heaven witness for me, my kind mistress, as I see with other eyes, and as I believe most truly, the two matters on which you have

given me your gracious confidence. As to his highness of Glocester's conduct, it cannot bring reproach to you."

"No, Benina—that I could bear, for I could prove it false—but it brings self-contempt home to my heart's core! I feel the scorn of his rejection rankling deep!"

"Use not that word, good Madam, it does not suit the case. The duke wooed you in all the fervour of a lover, and won your consent to his suit—"

"And now abandons me, for scenes of low intrigue and libertine adventure! Has Jacqueline of Holland survived that truth!"

"'Tis not so, Madam; in good sooth you do yourself dishonour, and may do his highness wrong—"

"Tut, tut, Benina! I saw his perfidy in his glance, the first moment of our meeting in that fatal forest—doubly fatal to my dignity! His every look confirmed it in our conference with Bishop Zweder, whose coarseness at least

brought out the truth from this false duke, and Van Monfoort's recital of the scene at Urk proves the worst."

"Deal lighter by his highness, Madam—consider the toils in which he is beset—the influence of the other dukes, the interests of England."

"No influence, no interests, Benina, should stand between an honourable man and the woman to whom he is pledged."

"But, Madam, you take for granted, perhaps prematurely, a sentence which the duke has not yet pronounced on himself."

"Yes, yes, he has, Benina.—He whose words or looks throw even a doubt upon his troth is condemned beyond redemption—but let this pass! It is a subject more political than personal—it wounds my vanity, my pride, my honour, but it does not touch my heart. I have in this case exposed no weakness as a woman, betrayed no duty as a sovereign. But in that other, Benina! Oh, what an age of shame have I brought on myself by the folly of a moment!"

" Forget the unworthy topic, Madam; let your mind turn back into its proper channel. Think upon royal Glocester in a fitting light. I feel assured he will soon return to you freed from those state-obstacles that trammel him, to make you his own—"

" Never, Benina, never! I swear to you that Glocester shall never possess this hand! No forced allegiance shall bind him nor any other to me—nor could I *now* bestow this heart, such as a chosen husband should possess it."

A deep sigh accompanied these words, and Jacqueline pressed her hand against her bosom to keep down the rising weakness.

" Alas, alas, Benina, dost thou not pity thy poor mistress? Thy pity I will take—nay ask, while that of others would drive my proud spirit mad. But thou hast been all to me in many a trial—my friend in defeat and sorrow, and now not less so in victory and shame."

" Dearest Madam—"

" Nay, speak not, my kind Benina, it is

vain to oppose this utter anguish. Have I not disgraced my birth, my station? Has not that luscious poison that I longed to taste entered my very heart? Have I not plucked the fatal fruit of knowledge and discovered my shame—or culled that other as treacherous, which travellers tell us is bloom without, but ashes within? Even so was that one deep draught of love's bitter waters—for it *was* love! Yes, Benina, I felt the bright unburning flame dart through my soul—my head reeled and my breast heaved in the intoxicating influence, and I, at last, for the first time in life—in my six and twentieth year, Benina, really felt the passion whose power they would limit to the first spring of youth! and for whom? A stranger—a mere youth compared to me—a creature of Burgundy—nay more, nay worse than all, one of that base and odious faction, my country's bane, my own worst enemies, my rebel subjects! Oh, 'tis too bad! Remorse has no sting poignant enough to punish me!"

"I must, I will speak to you, my mistress, and you will pardon me, I know. Indeed, madam, you do yourself wrong; you could not have loved this youth, so briefly seen, so soon to be forgotten. He did you a service, he bravely threw himself 'twixt you and danger, you felt a natural gratitude, that's all. This is not love, my noble mistress, you mistake the passion quite."

"List to me, Benina! Thou art wise, good girl, but in thine own conceit, when thou wouldst take a tone of deep experience over thy poor mistress. Alas! my friend, it needs no years of study, no learned lore to read Love's lessons. The voice of Nature, speaking in the gentle air, and breathing in the wild-flower's odour, is not more easily understood than Love's whisperings in the breast. Its light is like the Sun's. The heart is as ready for its first beam, as is all earth to catch the opening glance of day. Sensation is but a clasped volume till *it* touches the spring. Oh, it is not to be mistaken.

All else may be assumed—friendship, valour, piety—but love admits no counterfeit. Yes, it *was* love that urged me towards him, that threw him in my way, that laid the snare to which I rushed so rashly—but it was fate, Benina; I was doomed, and might not escape my lot!"

"Impossible, my beloved mistress. It could not be that you could love such a man as that, without one single badge of nobility, to say nothing of royalty, to which you are entitled in a lover—one noteless, quite unable even to give a name in answer to Lord Fitz-walter's challenge, or the Duke's command. Would not the Countess of Holland have felt the proud blood tingle in her veins?"

"She *did* feel it tingle, alas! alas!"

"A mere adventurer, my mistress! Perhaps an outlaw, at best some low-born hunter."

"Nay, nay, Benina, thou art too rapid in thy conclusions. The youth had nobility stamped on his mien, wisdom was in his words, valour and chivalry in his whole bearing. Never did

love tempt a woman in fairer guise, and had not that badge been on his bosom, branding him as the hot iron sears a felon, and marking him my foe,—but what do I say? Even had he not displayed that damning proof of enmity, have I not seen him since with vile associates, carrying that cap which marks each insolent head as that of a rebel subject? And to such a one as this have I given my girdle—a mark of honour such as princes have fought for, ay and not often gained. Shame, shame, Jacqueline! Hurried away by impulse—by passion even—to scandalize thy race. But did he not risk his life to save mine? And if in a double sense my enemy, was not his conduct the more generous?"

"Madam, he knew not that—"

"Peace, prithee, good girl, nor labour so hard to rob me of my only consolation."

"Indeed, Madam, I am sure the young man knew you not, but would have done as much for any female in like peril."

"The more a hero he; for others gave the

reins to their coursers in that perilous hour, and returned just in time to reap the glory he had gained."

Jacqueline had no sooner uttered this, than she felt its injustice. It did not require the deep blush on Benina's cheeks (half from remorse at her own timid desertion, and half from resentment at the aspersion on Lord Fitz-walter) to bring the Countess to a true sense of her words. She, with her usual frankness with her favourite and confident, acknowledged that she had spoken hastily, but she did not confess, perhaps did not quite understand, the feeling that had moved her.

"Indeed you do but justice to the noble Fitz-walter," replied Benina to her mistress's apology; "he has often and often told me he would peril his life a thousand times in your service."

"He *has* done so, Benina," answered Jacqueline; "never may I forget his conduct in the late fight, nor the risks he braved to keep me from them."

Benina glowed still deeper at this tribute to the Englishman's praise, yet shuddered in revived horror at the dangers he had encountered.

"Ay, my mistress," said she, "and he would again give like proof of his attachment. Would that you would charge him to seek out that presumptuous youth, and drag your favour from his bosom!"

"Forbid it, Heaven! Benina, art thou mad, to breathe a thought which might cause the youth's destruction—that is, let me say, which might betray my disgrace?"

"Ah, Madam, is the secret then safe in the keeping of yon Kabblejaw?"

"Yes, I will vouch for his honour. Come, Benina, I must end this subject here. Let's talk of it no more—at least not of *him!* Let me but remember my own weakness, and bitterly repent it. Let me gain strength to atone for one disgraceful moment! Let me rise up against the oppresssion of my shame, as I did at

the meeting of the archers, when my heart swelled, and my arm was new nerved at the very sight of this unlucky man, in his new aspect of rebel as well as foe!"

"And how he skulked from meeting your presence, Madam! Neither I nor Ludwick Van Monfoort could fix our eyes on him in the whole crowd of traitors."

"Albeit that *his* might have been fixed on *me!*" thought Jacqueline.

"Well, well, Benina!" said she, "here let this matter drop, and be discreet, my friend, in proportion as the secret is of import. Now let us on with this sad march of triumph, to meet my mother. And there again, Benina, what a sting assails me! My mother, of blood so pure, of mind so proud, to be at the mercy of a dastard murderer's tongue! Oh, God! can it be true what this base Giles Postel bruits abroad and boasts of? Can Marguerite of Bavaria have leagued with such as he, and urged so foul a deed? And did Van Vlyett die a just death? I

cannot, will not entertain the question—my blood boils, yet it freezes again with dread to sift the calumny. Let me meet my mother with the best countenance I may!"

The order of the procession was soon resumed; and Jacqueline, recovering her general aspect of proud yet melancholy beauty, rode at the head of her victorious troops, supported by her gallant brother, and the other chiefs who had so well fought her battle. The ensigns of the beaten Flemings were borne before the main body of the troops, and some hundreds of prisoners saved from death graced the triumphant march, their chains clanking in sad harmony with the insulting crash of music, and the shouts of the rejoicing people.

The deputation of magistrates, attending on the dowager countess, met Jacqueline at the city gates. The ceremonies usual on these occasions were gone through, and the keys resigned by the haughty mother to the humble daughter, who at all times, even in her highest state, paid

a deferential regard to the parent who had ruled her in early life, and who even now held a powerful influence over her. And justly so; for though she was the mover of her wretched marriage with John of Brabant, she had repaired that error of judgment, by a const nt adherence to Jacqueline's cause when an open rupture became unavoidable. And also in the whole of the contest in Hainault against Philip of Burgundy, Countess Marguerite had been unceasing in her endeavours with this her nephew to gain terms for Jacqueline, humiliating herself in vain entreaties, laying in a deep fund of hatred against the relentless victor, affording shelter in her castle at Valenciennes to her oppressed child, and finally flying with her to Holland, and joining her fate with her's in the contest which was now on foot.

The greetings over, the ceremonies past, and the day closed in, Jacqueline was delighted to find a late repose from the excitement and fatigue she had gone through.

## CHAPTER XII.

Enough may have been gathered from Jacqueline's own words to give a general notion of her state of mind. But very much beyond our skill would be required to paint, in all its conflicting details, the agitation of her various feelings. Pride struggling with sensibility, and passion battling with reason, she strove, how vainly! to hate the object that had caused this tumult in her heart and head. Then she would have turned the whole tide of regret upon herself, in angry reproaches. But this was an

equally vain attempt. Human nature cannot be long at war with its own weakness. A thousand spontaneous excuses rise up with the most rigid self-accusings; and even with the very sentence passed by our judgment an appeal goes to the heart, which never refuses mercy. Therefore, when Jacqueline was self-condemned, she was self-pardoned too. It has been seen with what warmth she repelled Benina's undervaluing hints relative to the young stranger. The very pride which reproached her weakness was interested in upholding its object. So while the strongest of her self-accusing passions was thus neutralising its attack, no wonder that those which rose in her defence gained a complete though unacknowledged victory. Had in fact the youth who had so gallantly defended, perhaps saved, her life—who was so brave, so elegant, so handsome, been also a partizan of her cause, she would unhesitatingly have indulged the feeling he had so strongly inspired. For Jacqueline, panting from early youth for that

passion which she felt herself so capable of enjoying, was instinct with the conviction that it would and ought to level slight shades of distinction between age and rank. She had for years looked out with an intense, but to no other eye visible, anxiety for some one to whom she could give her affections. But she felt that esteem, admiration, and perhaps gratitude, should first be due; and she had never met an object that united such claims, with that not-to-be-described attraction which consists neither in person, manner, or character, but which throws a hue over each, that makes a woman satisfied that all is better than perfect—that it suits and sympathises with herself. It is this that accounts for so many attachments, which to common observers appear incongruous. But similarity is not necessary to produce sympathy. Colours the most opposite blend together, and form a whole of beauty. Sounds the most different produce harmony. Dispositions the most varied go well in fellowship; perhaps

because we at once submit to and value what is so distinct from our own habitual tone of thought and feeling, too common to ourselves to be prized in another.

Humphrey of Glocester had come nearer to the moral standard which Jacqueline fancied she required, than any of the princes who had sought her hand, or any of the nobles she had an opportunity of knowing. Had circumstances permitted, and had he followed up the momentary feeling excited in the tent of the Zevenvolden, it is more than probable her regard for him might have grown fast, through those gradations which form the respectable but artificial attachment generally called love. But Glocester's subsequent manner during that interview quickly checked the incipient sentiment, and perhaps prepared Jacqueline the better for the reception of that which was so soon afterwards excited. And how forcibly did that explain to her at once its own nature, and that of those she had previously expe-

rienced! We do not pretend to say that our heroine fell all at once into those ecstacies of passion, which the spells of fairy-land are supposed to inspire. But it is most certain that she did grow redolent of that magic balm of feeling, which soothes and purifies the mind on first meeting with the being whom nature intends that it shall love. That pleasure in what we see of them, that wish to know more, that indefinable conviction of their worth, on grounds that we care not to examine; and that *something*, which supplies the absence of the very qualities we had ever before thought essential to the inspiration we then acknowledge.

These are among the symptoms of that passion which many for themselves may doubt—which some will perhaps confess to—but which all must believe to be that which influenced the whole future fate of our heroine. Had she felt it for the first time ten years earlier, she might have escaped from its effects. But at her age it was never to be effaced. The bud

which opens to an April sun may close again and ripen for some later ray; but the full-grown flower, catching the Summer's beam that bursts its prison, must either bloom or wither in the glow. So was the fate of Jacqueline's heart at stake. To combat the impression she had admitted in her own despite, formed the great business of her life. But as all feelings of high enthusiasm are strengthened by opposition, whether from oneself or others, she thus in endeavouring to stifle those sensations, unconsciously preserved and nourished them into a passion. But many auxiliary feelings lent their aid to harass her too sensitive mind. That arising from Glocester's conduct may be well imagined. Those connected with Giles Postel's wide-spread insinuations concerning her mother were now the uppermost of her anxieties.

Marguerite of Burgundy, Duchess Dowager of Hainault and Holland, was one of those second-rate characters of history and inferior

beings in creation, which may be all described by one sentence. Haughty, harsh, cruel; with little talent to redeem the want of virtue; upholding her child from pride rather than affection; and only sent down to posterity by the fortuitous circumstance of her birth, and her admitted confederacy in attempted crimes, too common to the age in which she lived to gain even the revolting tribute of our wonder. Every rank of society was in those days imbued with an indifference to human life that seems repugnant to man in a civilized state. Reckless of their own, they lose much of their claims to admiration for deeds of apparent heroism. Unsparing of that of others, they inspire disgust rather than horror—for murder was a common-place, every-day occurrence. Kings, princes and nobles walked abroad reeking with their victims' blood, as butchers of to-day parade their shambles. We loath their deeds but scarcely shudder at them, as we do in imagining the high-wrought atrocities that

leads to modern guilt. The frequent poisonings and poniardings of the times we treat of, and the assassinations by pistol-shot for full two centuries later, deprive those events of much of the romance which attaches to daring and unusual deeds, particularly to deeds of blood. There is really something more singular, and therefore more striking, in the picture of an individual shrinking from such acts, and in the efforts of persuasion necessary to excite to their commission. Such a scene we shall presently have to describe.

It was now night. The external rejoicings had ceased; and the strong castle of Amersfort was undisturbed and silent. The household had all retired. Benina Beyling had left Jacqueline's apartment. Her women were dismissed; and no one remained with her but her mother, the Countess Marguerite, who sat by the side of the little platform on which stood the copper brazier with burning charcoal, the means then used to warm all rooms but dining

halls; and even in these the fire was generally made against a *reredosse*, the "multitude of chimneys," so marvelled at by a later English chronicler, not having become common in Europe.

The conversation of the countess, prolonged far beyond the usual hour of retiring, turned upon the recent events. The dowager took the lead in the discourse, asking many questions of her daughter as to the progress of her arms, the particulars of the battles, and the state of matters with Glocester, to all which inquiries Jacqueline gave respectful answers, but in some instances with reserve, and in most with a lassitude bordering on apathy. Her mother went on nevertheless, and with an air almost as absorbed as her own, but shewing a mixture of restlessness with thought, as though some unformed purpose struggled in her mind. She ran on at times with a fluent string of questions, without waiting for the answers to those first put; and she sometimes started, muttered a

few imperfect words, or fixed her eyes and compressed her lips, in a manner that seemed to Jacqueline quite awful, when coupled with the memory of Giles Postel's dark accusation. She shuddered often as she caught the stern expression of her mother's face, half in shade and half lighted by the pale red blaze that rose from the brazier and tinged its outlines. Chime after chime had been told by the castle clock since the attendants had retired, but Countess Marguerite took no note of the increasing hours, and Jacqueline, certain that it was long past midnight, was yet unwilling to urge her mother's departure; for she herself felt spell-bound, wishing, yet daring not, to broach the subject she would have given worlds to speak on. She hoped her mother would give some opening which she might lead to it; and while anxiously watching for such, she started with surprise, and a dread she was quite unused to, as the old countess suddenly exclaimed—

"Van Vlyett did not then die for nought!"

"Oh, was he then indeed guilty?" cried Jacqueline involuntarily.

"Guilty!" repeated her mother. "Perhaps he gave the draught, which was drugged by another hand—perhaps thy perfidious uncle was sent prematurely to his doom—all that may be; and by the law the agent of justice is called guilty in such a case. So far poor Van Vlyett paid the forfeit of this deed, which restores thee to thy rights, my child; and as they now seem secured by these late victories, I say he did not die for nought."

Jacqueline saw she had quite misunderstood her mother's exclamation. She shuddered while Van Vlyett's crime was thus almost admitted and openly defended; and the acknowledgment that he had an accomplice terrified her quite. But it will be believed it was not for the reputation of Giles Postel she was alarmed. She would have uttered that name at once and have plainly mentioned the insinuations he

spread abroad, but she was restrained by dread of a bold avowal on her mother's part. She now scarcely doubted her guilt, and she dared not risk destroying its only negative disproof, by forcing a confession, perhaps a vaunt of complicity.

"Good my mother," said she with averted eyes, "let us not rake the ashes of the dead —if Van Vlyett did the deed for which he suffered, God assoil him, and grant that it may not lead to war and mischief instead of the good you see!"

"How now, Jacqueline! desponding in the very hour of triumph!"

"Not so, my mother—but still uncertain of results, and doubtful if a cause resting upon crime deserve success."

Jacqueline felt that she had said too much—that she had almost upbraided her mother. She would have qualified her words or claimed pardon for them—but she felt as though that would be adding insult to accusation. The

reply to her observations relieved her from that anxiety only by entailing a greater.

"My daughter!" said Countess Marguerite, "when wilt thou learn by experience strength of mind, as thou hast by nature boldness of heart? How mayest thou contend with cares of state and thy many foes, if thou canst not see that expediency and justice mean the same? Can villany be softened by fair words, or the wolf subdued by the bleatings of the lamb? Must not a trap be laid for the monsters of the forest, and an ambush set for pitiless men? Is it crime to rid ourselves of tyranny? Thy cause is good, my child—Heaven prospers it! But not till usurping Burgundy and imbecile Brabant lie as quiet in their tombs as does old John of Liege, art thou indeed secure. Thou must become a widow, Jacqueline. Death, who has no rival for his sceptre, must sign thy divorce, since they cavil at Pope Benedict. Then Glocester shall have no impediment between him and thy arms. And when my one weak

nephew sleeps the long sleep, who knows but Philip, the strong one, the insatiate robber of thy rights, may find his hour at hand, and leave thee wholly free! Heaven is good, my daughter, to raise up instruments for the helpless; witness Van Vlyett, if he did the deed—Glocester, whose bravery is thy right arm! And others may spring up in thy hour of need—or act in thy behalf, my child, without exposing themselves or thee to danger. So now to bed, to bed, and dream of happy days! Think that thy mother watches and prays for thee.—Hark! Two o'clock! How the hours fly! I am late—to-bed, my Jacqueline—rest thee well!"

A kiss accompanied these words; and though her mother's lips had never pressed hers as softly as she thought a mother's should, Jacqueline fancied that they were never so harsh as now. The kiss thrilled through her frame. She could not return it; and she made no attempt to speak in reply to the final blessing,

which was murmured over her. The dowager took her ready-lighted lamp, and hastened from the room, by a door opening into her daughter's private closet, and thence communicating with a passage joining her own, of which passage the two countesses alone kept the keys.

Jacqueline gazed at her mother's figure as it passed away, as lightly as though innocence and youth impelled it. She would not trust herself to follow up in thought the contrast which the truth presented. She was thoroughly unhappy; and a sense of fear oppressed her, as though she had been in contact with something unholy; for, added to the dread of her mother's complicity in the deed that was done, was the fear that she contemplated others as atrocious. She endeavoured to sleep, but in vain—or if for a few brief minutes she sunk in slumber, scenes that would have taken hours in real action crowded upon her in frightful succession. The blackened face and writhing form of her poisoned uncle—Van Vlyett, on his gibbet—Giles Postel

mixing the fatal draught, or reeking with the blood of the slaughtered prisoners, were the principal objects; and the figure of her mother gliding through every scene added a tenfold horror to each. She started at length from her unquiet bed. Her lamp was expiring. She felt as though she had been asleep for hours; and unable to support the torture of her doubts and fears, she suddenly resolved to rise to seek her mother, and at once put an end to her suspense, let conviction bring what pain it might. She wrapped her night-cloak round her, took from a table the key of the private passage, and passed into her closet without a moment's pause. She applied her key to the lock with no hesitating hand, for she rather wished to give notice of her approach. She entered the passage, and as she gained the opposite door that opened to her mother's closet, she stopped an instant and heard the clock strike three. She doubted for a moment if she were not the sport of magic,—again she thought that she still slept—for how

could such an age of torture have been compressed into one little hour? Recovering this check she pursued her way, unlocked the door, entered the closet, and soon hurried through it into the adjoining bed-room. The lamp which the Countess Marguerite had carried away still faintly glimmered on the table. Jacqueline approached the bed with a half desperate determination to waken the sleeper, and resolve the question of her innocence or guilt. As she raised the curtain, her hand trembled, her heart sunk, and she again felt overpowered with the dread of having her fears confirmed. But then in a movement of convulsive haste she raised the velvet drapery; and to her mixed relief and terror she saw that the bed was untenanted.

Starting back in alarm, a pang of personal fear was her next sensation—why or wherefore she knew not. But might not her mother, in her turn, have fallen a victim to the fate she so remorselessly invoked for others? and might not some treacherous hand be near to deal the

blow to *her?* As she stood transfixed with fear, a murmuring sound broke on her ear, proceeding from the little chapel, which was only separated by a small ante-room from the bed-chamber. It was her mother's voice! It sounded like accents from Heaven.

"Thank God, thank God!" cried Jacqueline, dropping on her knees and clasping her hands, "she is safe—she is at prayer! while I suspected, and was almost ready to accuse her of crime!"

## CHAPTER XIII.

Springing on her feet again, she felt irresistibly impelled to steal towards the chapel, to witness and join in the orisons which affected her so deeply. She moved quietly across the floor and into the ante-room. The door communicating directly with the chapel was open; and this temple for private worship—or perhaps for secret sin—was hung at each side with tapestry, so placed as to admit of one person gliding between it and the wall, without touching either. The deep and earnest tones of

Countess Marguerite's voice came from the upper end, near the altar; and Jacqueline stole along for some yards, to where she knew some cunning oylet-holes were left in the broidered web, to allow of an observer looking through without much chance of detection. Anxious not to disturb her mother's solemn devotions, she scarcely ventured to breathe; and placing her eye to one of the interstices, she looked on with pious anxiety.

She saw her mother indeed—but how accompanied? She sat at a table close below the altar-steps; beside her were two men leaning and listening to her hollow-sounding voice; on the table were two tall brass candlesticks, from the tapers of which a lurid gleam fell down upon the group, shewing several open rolls of parchment, two daggers, and an iron collar, an old instrument of torture; while Jacqueline, gasping from suppressed agitation, recognised beyond doubt in one of the men, the odious countenance of the murderer, Giles Postel. His

look was as usual, dogged and determined. It was impossible to read in it any reflection of Countess Marguerite's discourse. Whatever that might be, his mind seemed quite made up. Not so with the other man. He was also young, but his face gleamed with an expression of uncertain fanaticism, as if his whole soul was in the affair debated, but its purpose not decided on. He leaned forward, holding the edge of the table firmly with each hand, and staring into the dowager's face as she lectured or read. Her back was to Jaqueline, who only saw by her gestures that she was in argument rather than mere conversation, and with evident reference to the parchment before her, which she held open with one hand, and occasionally pointed to or struck with the other. Jacqueline was for some minutes unable to comprehend a word of what was uttered. Confused, shocked, and alarmed, all buzzed in her ears. The chambers of her brain seemed at once to echo the sounds and render them indistinct. The first

words she understood were positively from scripture! Was then her mother indeed at prayer? Was she reading from the sacred scroll passages of comforting import to the ruffian who had slandered her, and to his unknown but ingenuous-looking companion? The thought was one of those meteor gleams which hope casts across a generous mind, wishing to think well of another, and striving to shut out the less dazzling light of truth, when that other is a relative and ought to be a friend. But in the present instance reality soon dissipated the illusion. Taking advantage of a moment's pause in the Countess Marguerite's discourse, the stranger said, with a constrained energy of manner—

"But even supposing, most gracious Madam, that I, a liege subject of our much-honoured and greviously injured lady, Countess Jacqueline, have a right to slay her oppressor—and the weighty reasons you have adduced almost convince me that I have—am I authorised as well to slay this duke without hearing what he has to

say in his own defence? Let me be better assured on that head, I pray you. I have considered and studied it well—but St. Austin, in his Civitas Dei, is strong on the point—'Whoever slays even a criminal,' says he, 'without lawful authority, shall be judged guilty of murder—*velut homicidia judicabitur!*'—What says the pleadings on that head?"

"Thy scruples, young man, do thee credit, and thy learning proves thee studious as well as virtuous. Great honour do I hold it to engage such a youth in our holy cause. Hearken, then! Thus saith the pleadings—'It is lawful for any subject without any particular orders from any one, but from divine, moral, and natural law, to slay a tyrant; as may be proved by twelve reasons, in honour of the twelve apostles. The first three reasons are drawn from the authorities of three moral philosophers—three others from St. Augustine's dogmas of sacred theology—three from writers on the civil law—and three from examples drawn from holy scripture."

"Read, read those high authorities," said the young man, with strained looks.

"To cite the whole pleading at length, my young friend, would consume the night, but hear the names—St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Peter, Sabelliars, Aristotle, Cicero, Boccacio—and hearken to the summing up—'A subject who puts a tyrant to death does a work deserving praise; being lawful to put him to death, it is allowable to cheat him by flattering speeches; it is fair and just to cut him off suddenly by ambush, when it is to save the life and property of one's sovereign from the spoiler,'—and is not Philip a spoiler?—Is not John a tyrant?"

"That, noble dame, I not only admit, but will die for—the authorities are good, but St. Austin's words are as strong—therefore—"

"And what says St. Paul, good youth? 'To follow the literal sense of the scriptures even, is death to the soul!' And what rule of law or morals has not its exception?"

"I begin to see the light of these reasonings,

my honoured Madam. Pardon me if I seem bold in pressing the argument—but the cases from scripture?—are they noted in the scroll?"

"They are, and argued on at length. The first is that of Moses, who, without any authority, slew the Egyptian that tyrannised over the Israelites. The second is that of the high priest, who had the wicked Athalia waylaid and murdered. The third, that of St. Michael, the arch-angel, who, without any orders from God, killed Lucifer, the most perfect creation that God had ever made. And did not Joab slay Absalom the conspirator, even contrary to the commands of David, his father and king?—but who afterwards thanked Joab, as a good and loyal knight, as God rewarded St. Michael with riches and power, and as thou shalt be thanked and rewarded and honoured, my good youth, when thou hast released thy lawful Sovereign, Countess Jacqueline, from one or other of those cruel tyrants who oppress us all."

"The reasoning is unanswerable!" said the

young man, with a firmer expression of countenance, as if he were by degrees convinced.

"And what," continued the dowager, "is the conclusion, drawn from all those inspired arguments of this great doctor of theology, this learned expounder of law, this eloquent advocate of right? Why this—list to his words—'Such is the proper death for tyrants. They should be slain by ambush and way-laying, or other the readiest means, improper to be used towards good men.' And for this reason, we are bound to preserve our faith even to our own deadliest enemy, but never to a tyrant!"

"And what faith do we owe to Duke Philip or Duke John? Are *they* our masters?" said Giles Postel, turning his leaden look on the Neophyte; "is there a clerk in your college, John Chevalier, who can prove that?"

"And think awhile of her who is your lawful mistress," resumed the old Countess. "Let your thoughts turn to her and her sufferings, from these her odious relations, my own ne-

phews, whom I cast off and doom to their well-merited fate. For as sure as we see the flame of these consecrated tapers, which I took from yon altar to light our conference, so sure shall Philip of Burgundy and John of Brabant die the death of tyrants ere a week be passed, and then burn for ever in—"

A thrill of horror ran through Jacqueline. She leaned back against the wall, and did not hear the remainder of the impious sentence. But her feelings were too much wound up, and her curiosity too intense to allow of more than a moment's interruption. She resumed her station close to the tapestry, and looked through the narrow opening. She saw the young student, for such his dress, now plainly seen, proclaimed him to be, standing up, one of the daggers in his hand, and his countenance lighted to actual fury, as he exclaimed—

"Yes, I swear it again and again, one of them shall die by this hand, immolated at the shrine of vengeance, in honour of thy beautiful

daughter, the Countess Jacqueline, to whose cause I devote myself body and soul!" and with these words he kissed the dagger's hilt.

"Noble youth!" said the dowager, "thus wilt thou gain great glory here, and eternal joy hereafter. But calm thy transport. The holy vow taken, we must now regulate the means and method of the deeds to be done. How, my brave friends, will ye decide on your separate victims?"

"It is to me indifferent;" said Postel, "but I think I had better take Philip in my care. I know the ways of his people better than my young friend, John Chevalier. I hand over to him his namesake, the mock husband of her who so inflames his idolatry. And sooth to say, I am not such an enthusiast for her sake. I will kill Duke Philip for *you*, my honoured lady, for the goodly sum in golden crowns which fills this purse, and the honourable place that is to be the meed of success. The eloquence of Doctor John Petit and his long

pleading was not wanting to convince me of the justice of whatever I am well paid for."

A half chuckle accompanied this speech, as Postel chinked a leathern bag in his hand, and then secured it in the girdle of his doublet.

"Take then this dagger!" said the dowager; "it is of Milan steel, three sided, and its point should be kept from moisture, mind thee; let it not quit the sheath—"

"Until it finds a fleshy one in Duke Philip's body. I understand you, Countess, and shall not wipe off the anointment, trust me!"

During this diabolical arrangement, the young student, just initiated into the scheme of death, had seized with avidity the scroll from which Countess Marguerite had drawn her arguments, and he pored over its contents as if they were the very manna of righteousness, instead of the essence of sophistry, iniquity, and nonsense.*

* This pleading of Master Jean Petit in defence of the Duke of Burgundy's having obtained the murder of his

"Take it with you, noble youth," said the dowager; and the young man immediately folded it up and put it under his cloak, while she proceeded—"Take it with you, read it word by word, imbibe the inspiration that dictated it. And can Philip, my ingrate nephew, dare to throw a doubt, even when the dagger is against his breast, on the high authorities which justified his own father, my beloved brother, whom God pardon, for ridding the world of a tyrant, not half so pernicious as he is himself?

cousin-german, the Duke of Orleans, is given at full length by Monstrelet: it consists of about eighty octavo pages, and is one of the most curious documents of the times. The confusion of argument and authorities is quite preposterous. The Psalmist and the Prophet—David and Daniel—the Saints and the Apostles—authors, sacred and profane, are mixed up together with a perversion of sense, truth, and justice, in the most monstrous manner. It was recited before the Dauphin, afterwards Charles VII., King of Sicily, and a crowd of cardinals, princes, and other nobles. The orator recommending himself and his cause to the protection and support of "God his Creator and Redeemer, his glorious Mother, and my Lord St. John the Evangelist, the Prince of Theologians."

No, he, nor his poor minion, John of Brabant, nor their creatures and tools, may controvert one argument, much less avert the blows that are about to be dealt them. Will you then, John Chevalier, since you are so called—Chevalier that will be ere long, by title as well as by name—"

"And chamberlain to the beauteous Countess Jacqueline! Such is your sacred promise, Madam; repeat it, that I may be assured of the only reward I seek, the felicity of daily beholding the most lovely being that ever wore human form!"

"Such is my positive pledge to thee, on the honour of my noble race!" said the dowager, while the trembling Jacqueline grew cold and pale, at finding her fatal beauty the inspiration of this young fanatic.

"I am now then ready for your bidding," said John Chevalier, with a solemn tone.

"Lay down the dagger, then," replied the dowager. "Thou shalt do a deed of safe and

lawful death—but I leave to this gallant squire the task of a bloody sacrifice and a desperate risk. Look at this collar!" and with the words she took up the rusted engine of suffering which lay on the table. "This instrument is made to fit all necks—a clasp more or less straitens or sets it loose—the throat it circles, in the grasp of a bold hand, may be made soon to rattle in death, or if the culprit merit delay he can be left to linger as long as justice deems his meed. Methinks, good champion of a righteous cause, the narrowest span will best suit Duke John of Brabant! so take it with thee; seek his privacy on some forged commission. Even if detected, and this trinket found upon thee, what does it prove? 'Tis out of use, and none may suspect it for its purpose—it is a good dissembler, and may teach thee a lesson. It was picked up by chance—a curious relic, bought for a trifle, digged from a ruin, or what not? A scholar as thou art, bold Chevalier, needs not the hints of a simple matron such as me. But read the precepts

and reasonings of the divine doctor whose noble writings are in thy bosom; do as I have done, and learn the whole by heart—to thee, learned youth, an easy task—to me a work of labour and hard study. But thirst for knowledge can be only quenched at the deep fount of truth—and *there* I have found it."

"I take this collar and this sacred scroll, as the symbols of truth and justice, on the mission of which I now enter," exclaimed Chevalier, enveloping both objects in his cloak. "No danger shall hold me back, no torture terrify me, no power absolve me from my vow. What is once consecrated can never be desecrated—such is one mighty precept of theology—and I stand here its living type!"

"And what wilt *thou* do, in this good cause?" said the dowager, turning to Giles Postel.

"Plunge this blade into Philip's heart!" was the brief and calmly-uttered reply.

"Enough—enough!" exclaimed the presiding priestess of these diabolical orgies. "Now

let us all break up; and with the dawn be ye both on your several routes. Replace these holy candlesticks on the altar—recommend yourselves to your saints, and speed you on your work! Good night, brave friends, I thank you for my daughter as for myself."

"I need not her thanks," muttered Postel.

"I will work out my claim to call myself her devoted servitor!" said Chevalier aloud. Jacqueline shrunk back, half imagining that the glance of his protruding eyes was fixed on hers.

In a minute or two after the dowager had retired, Giles Postel took up the candlesticks, and with irreverent carelessness scrambled upon the altar and placed them in their wonted stations. While this went on, Jacqueline, bent on one purpose, let the cost be what it might, slipped quietly round behind the altar, and gaining the opposite side of the chapel, stationed herself close to the door of entrance from the great corridor, still screened behind the tapestry. When Postel had

finished his task, she heard him say to his companion,

"Well then, wait here awhile—I will descend and see that all is safe below, and quickly return to conduct thee through the private passage. Meanwhile thou canst say a few paters and aves, or a short prayer for the souls we shall soon send to purgatory."

As the wretch passed by Jacqueline's station he moved the tapestry with his shoulder, which shook, while he laughed at his own impiety. She shrunk back, as though the very canvas had been a conductor of contamination, and looking towards the dimly-lighted altar, she saw Chevalier standing still before it. A new notion immediately flashed across her. She threw off her cloak where she stood, and gliding back, she soon gained the rear of the altar. Convinced that religious feeling worked deep in such a mind as Chevalier's, and knowing that one mysterious sentence had more power on such a mind than volumes of evidence,

she resolved in the impulse of the moment to address some warning to him, to which the state of his feelings, and the scene around him might give a solemnity she could not hope to belong to her. But her own frame of mind at that instant was as near to inspiration as mortal feeling may be; and there are few men even in a less superstitious age who might not have been profoundly struck by what followed. Raising her arm, with no premeditated movement, but thus giving to her figure an air such as we attribute to supernatural visitants, her night-robes of pure white hanging in loose drapery, and her features concealed by the altar's shade, Jacqueline glided out, and exclaimed, in a voice that trembled as though it came from the recess of the sacred tabernacle,

"It is written—'Thou shalt do no murder!'"

Terrified, as well at the sound of her own voice in such a situation, as by the almost phrenzied start of the young man and his instant falling on his face on the altar-steps, as though

her words had violated the divine precept they uttered, Jacqueline felt for a moment as if suspended between life and death. But the youth as quickly raised himself on his knees, and with uplifted hands burst into an exclamation of prayer. Seeing this she instantly disappeared behind the canvas, regained her former position near the door, gathered up her cloak and wrapped it round her; and then hearing the stealthy foot of Giles Postel returning up the stairs, she hurried into the corridor, resolved to put her first design into immediate execution. Jacqueline had no personal fears in confronting this man; yet she shuddered as she saw his figure ascending the stair, in the rays of the lamp that burned all night in the corridor. She stood on the upper step; and as he placed his foot on it he threw up his eyes and recognised her. He started back, and gazed at her without uttering a word.

"Follow me!" said Jacqueline, pointing to a door on the opposite side of the corridor

towards which she moved. Postel involuntarily obeyed her, for he was as much affected by her sudden appearance and manner as was possible to a being so little susceptible of abrupt sensations. She entered the room, taking the lamp from its marble pedestal on the corridor and placing it on a table. She then shut the door. As she did so, the ruffian placed his hand on his dagger, in actual fear of a defenceless and innocent woman.

"Attempt not to menace me," said Jacqueline, observing and mistaking the action.

"I do not menace you, Countess," said he; "but——"

"But what, then?—Why that hand on your poniard's hilt?"

"Why do *you* close the door? This looks like treachery—even, Madam, when I am about to do you important service," and he looked searchingly round the chamber.

"That the treacherous fear even their own weapons, is an old saying," exclaimed Jacque-

line ; " you may well doubt yours, Giles Postel, for it is vowed to a bad cause."

" 'Tis to *yours*."

" No, I disown, I scorn the service of assassins. I trust my cause to Heaven, and will have no other ally. Give me up that infernal weapon—I command you, on your allegiance—and instantly abandon your base design against Duke Philip."

" Countess Jacqueline," said the ruffian, recovering his self-possession on seeing our heroine's agitation and his own security,—" Countess, you have taken Giles Postel for the first time in his life at fault—and that is another score in the debt I owe you. It was you then that moved the tapestry, ere while, which I thought the wind, and which my companions did not mark ?"

" Your companions, fellow ?"

" Come, countess, no insult now ! you have not your English braggarts at your back ; and by Heavens this poniard would as soon find a

sheath in yours as in Duke Philip's breast! Sooner, mayhap, for you have dishonoured me —think you I forget the field of Haerlem? Beware then, and let me name your mother as I list—is she not my companion in this venture? I know you overheard us just now, and can judge of my former hints concerning her."

Jacqueline was overwhelmed with terror at his words, and the look which accompanied his deliberate tone. His eyes seemed thirsting for her blood. She turned towards the door, intending to fly to the protection of the young enthusiast in the chapel; but Postel stepped between her and it, and said—

"No, no!—you shall not escape, to rouse the household and betray your best friends—perhaps to retrace your steps to the protection of the English lord."

"Wretch!" exclaimed Jacqueline, indignation rising above her fears.

"One more abusive word, and the dagger is in your heart!" calmly cried Postel, seizing

her by the arm and laying his hand on the weapon's hilt. "You have put yourself in my power," continued he, "and you must take the consequences. What a fool you supposed me, and have proved yourself to be! Did you then think to bully Giles Postel by big words and looks? Your mother knows me better, and you shall know me too. What brought you here? Why did you beckon me in? What would you with me? Have you turned fickle to Fitz-walter for my sake, as you did to Glocester for his, and to Duke John for Glocester's? Would you—"

"Audacious villain!" cried Jacqueline, shaking off the ruffian's hold, with a tone and look of impassioned dignity, which for a moment paralysed his ferocity. "I see that I am indeed in your power—that I have madly believed myself strong in my hour of utmost weakness,—but still I defy as sternly as I despise you. I scorn your threats, and disown your service. Take my life, if you will—but if you have one spark of manly feeling, do not

outrage my honour and my innocence, by such atrocious words as these !"

"Why did you outrage *my* honour, and turn me over to all the infamy your authority could command? Do you repent the injury you did me? Will you repay it—largely?"

"I will make no terms with you," replied Jacqueline proudly; "release me now and I promise to pardon you and keep silent on this outrage, which I have perhaps rashly provoked, on condition that you attempt not Duke Philip's life."

"Conditions! you are truly in good trim to make them, Countess, are you not?" said the fellow, his natural brutality struggling through the awe inspired by Jacqueline's bearing, and the irresolution caused by his conviction, that he had suffered that brutality to carry him too far.

"What would you of me?" asked the princess.

"That on the very first occasion you dub me knight with your own hand, as you did at Haerlem to others less meriting knighthood

than I do. Thus you will wipe out the stain you so cruelly threw on my honour. Next that you pledge yourself to give me ample sums of gold, to equip me as a champion of your chivalry should be equipped. This solemnly sworn to, you may retire, and learn not to meddle with men like me, nor mar the projects intended to aid your cause. Refuse these terms, and by this hand I swear the door shall open instantly, and a witness from the chapel —you have seen or heard him—shall enter and find you clasped in my arms!"

"I promise it all!" cried Jacqueline, shuddering with disgust and dread, uncertain if the dogged villain might not act up to his threat, and only thinking of escape without weighing the doctrine of moral obligation. "Stand by and let me pass, I will do all you require."

"Softly, softly Countess—there are two points to be considered first; and you will see I hold your reputation dearer than yourself. Were you to go out in this dishevelled dress,

and meet on the corridor or stair your other champion, or some straggling domestic, what might slander say? I will first retire with my friend, young Chevalier, and leave you a clear passage. The next security for your honour in another view is this, that you give me some token in pledge of your promise; you might else forget it—for princes have short memories, you know!"

"You cannot doubt my word. Did one of my race ever break faith?"

"Good, Countess, I have no learning, and am bad at logic. Give me, therefore, at once that ruby ring from your finger, or the door flies open, and who lists may enter it."

With these words he made a gesture as if to clasp Jacqueline's waist, and laid one hand upon the bolt.

"Ask not this ring—it was my father's gift —the only relic left me of his love."

"What else have you to give? I see nothing but those tresses that may be recognised

as truly your's. Shall I cut one off with my dagger, and wear it like a favour in my cap?"

"Here, take the ring—profane not my person by touching even one curl of hair. Take the ring, and Heaven absolve me if it is crime to part with it!"

She took the gem from her finger and handed it to him. "Lie there, a credible witness of our compact!" muttered he, placing it within his doublet.

"Now set me free!" said Jacqueline. "Away from my presence, and God turn thy hardened heart from its terrible intent!"

"Farewell, Countess!" said Giles Postel, with a triumphant and insolent smile. "Farewell, and remember this lesson—be discreet and silent. Recollect you have not only my character in your keeping, but that your mother's and your own are at stake. Let your conscience be satisfied—you have acted your part well. Leave the good duke and your honoured husband to the care of Heaven—and of *us*. And let me

warn you once for all—beware of uttering a hint, or breathing a thought of this!"

He clapped his hand on his dagger with these concluding words, gently opened the door, and left the room. Jacqueline sunk on a seat, and almost fainted from the revolution of her high-wrought feelings. She was roused to sensation by hearing the steps of the conspirators as they descended the marble stair, and the distant closing of a door told her they were beyond the castle walls. She then sought her mother's room, determined to reveal every word that had just passed; and by an appeal to every feeling of maternal love, womanly softness, or Christian charity, to avert the dreadful deeds, towards the execution of which the associates were even then on their way. She soon passed the chapel and the ante-room, and reached her mother's chamber. The loud breathing from the bed told her she already slept; more shocked by this proof of remorseless cruelty than if she had seen her mother in agonies of repentant suffer-

ing, she could not brave the risk of rousing her, and incurring a scene of probable reproach and outrage. She passed through the room and the adjoining closet, fastened the door carefully, gained her own chamber, dressed hastily, awoke a faithful attendant, and before the dawn had fully broken, she summoned Ludwick Van Monfoort to a secret interview in her private cabinet.

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